

WALSALL CHRONICLE



Thursday, December 13, 2012

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Going crackers

Pelsall village school's festive fair is a big success

Focus – page 16



Avion entertains

Book celebrates history of Aldridge picture house

Memory Lane – page 18



Saddlers slide

Butler sees red as Walsall slip towards drop zone

Sport – pages 39 & 40



Crucial day for future of leisure pool plan

AMBITIOUS plans to create a new leisure centre in Walsall Wood are due to move a step forward at a meeting today (Thursday).

Moves to build a new Oak Park Leisure Centre and demolish the existing building have been lodged by Walsall Council.

An eight-lane 25 metre swimming pool, a teaching pool, a large sports hall the size of six badminton courts, a fitness suite, health spa, dance studio and catering facilities are part of the plan.

Members of the planning committee are being recommended to grant permission for the scheme when they meet today.

It is proposed the new Oak Park Leisure Centre would be built on playing fields to the rear of the current site with a new access route off Coppice Road.

It would be constructed before the other building is demolished with junior football pitches and more than 100 parking spaces created. The existing artificial pitch would get new floodlights.

Three letters of support and three objections have been received.

Airlift for stab victim

A MAN was airlifted to hospital after being stabbed in the leg in Bloxwich.

Police launched an investigation after they were called to the semi-detached property in Stoney Lane.

A cordon was put in place across the driveway after the 45-year-old was found with the groin injury by paramedics on Monday.

Investigation

He was flown to Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham due to initial fears over the seriousness of the wound. His condition was later described as non-life threatening.

West Midlands Police spokesman Lee Page said: "An investigation is underway to establish how the man came to sustain the injury."

Dame Mo 'overwhelmed' by support

SUPERHEAD Dame Mo Brennan this week said she had been "overwhelmed" by support for her as it emerged that she will not be banned from the classroom.

Dame Mo Brennan, headteacher of Barr Beacon School, will face no further action after being found guilty by a disciplinary panel of altering attendance records at a previous school.

Dame Mo, with senior teachers Shelley Derham and Linda Westwood, were all found to have acted "dishonestly" when they changed pupil attendance records while all three were working at Hillcrest School and Community

College, in Netherton, Dudley. But a Teaching Agency panel has now ruled a ban is not necessary for the three teachers, all of whom now work at Barr Beacon.

Dame Mo thanked people for their support during the hearing.

"I've been overwhelmed by the support I've received from staff, parents and pupils from Barr Beacon School in Walsall and from Hillcrest School and Community College in Dudley, as well as from across the country," she said.

A judgment published by the Teaching Agency disciplinary panel and agreed by Education Sec-

retary Michael Gove said it was in the public interest for Dame Mo, Mrs Derham and Mrs Westwood to stay in teaching.

Alan Meyrick, Teaching Agency deputy director, said it would be "disproportionate" to impose a prohibition order.

It also concluded the "exceptional achievements" of Mrs Westwood and Mrs Derham meant it was in the public interest for them to continue "inspiring and improving the life chances" of pupils.

Governors at Barr Beacon backed Dame Mo throughout.



Dame Mo Brennan

Car thieves threaten pregnant motorist

A MINI emblazoned with the number seven was stolen after a pregnant woman was threatened in a Walsall car park.

Two men demanded that the 37-year-old, who is six-months pregnant, hand over her car keys and drove off in the black racing-style Mini from Intown Row, in Walsall town centre.

Detective Constable Lorraine Bytheway said it the vehicle had the number seven painted on each side.

Shaken

The attack happened at a time when other people would have been around and had left the victim very shaken.

"Although this robbery may cause concern to residents in Walsall, I want to reassure the people that incidents like this are rare and we are working hard to find the people responsible," said DC Bytheway.

The incident happened at about 6pm on Thursday, December 6.

Anyone with information can call 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

ROSIE HAS HOPE AFTER SPINAL OP

A five-year-old girl from Walsall has become the first child in Europe to have pioneering spinal surgery that could help her walk. Rosie Davies went through the 13-hour procedure at Birmingham Children's Hospital.



Walsall girl Rosie Davies now hopes to walk like her big sister Mia

She is the only person in the UK to suffer from an extremely rare spinal condition which means the lower segment of her spine is missing. It means she has little feeling in her legs and cannot move them.

Without the surgery, her organs would have been compressed and eventually failed.

But a month after surgery – which had only been performed once before, in New Zealand – Rosie has more sensation in the upper part of her legs, meaning her parents can consider prosthetic limbs.

Sister

Rosie's mother Mandy Collett said the surgery could help her daughter achieve her goal of walking like her elder sister Mia.

"Rosie has never considered herself as disabled," she said.

"She decides what she

which is her ultimate goal in life.

"After her operation, and with the correct support, we're confident now that she will be able to find a way to do that, to some degree."

"She loves her older sister Mia dearly and has always aspired to be like her."

"She always says she would like to walk like Mia one day and that Mia would teach her."

Rosie's parents said they could not thank the surgeons at Birmingham Children's Hospital enough.

Father Scott said: "Rosie has been through so much over the last few years, and we hope now that this will mean a better future for our little girl and maybe a chance for her to walk in the future."

Consultant neurosurgeon Mr Guirish Solanki, from Birmingham Children's Hospital, said: "We are delighted with the results of this operation."

Getting crafty this Christmas

YOUNGSTERS can get creative in the run-up to this Christmas and let their imaginations run wild at a festive craft session at Walsall Museum this weekend.

The event is taking place at the Lichfield Street venue on Saturday from 11am to 1pm.

Children get the opportunity to make unique stocking-shaped Christmas cards and can also get festive with plenty of glitter, sparkles and glue.

Provided

The craft session costs 75p and is designed for youngsters aged five to 12.

All materials are provided and places do not have to be booked. Parents and carers must remain with their children.

Walsall Museum can also add a heritage twist to your festive shopping list with a range of gifts to bring a local flavour to Christmas with local themed cards, books and Walsall DVD.



Community history curator Jennifer Thomson gets ready for Christmas craft sessions at Walsall Museum

Power cut hits 50,000

MORE than 50,000 homes and businesses in Walsall, Willenhall and Wolverhampton were plunged into darkness on Tuesday morning by a major power cut.

Wolverhampton railway station was in darkness, platforms were evacuated. Roads were hit with traffic lights and street lamps also out.

Problems began at around 7am and were caused by a power failure at a substation in Willenhall.

It caused three Willenhall schools to close due to problems with heating, while properties in Bentley and parts of Darlaston were also hit.

Pupils at Barcroft Primary, Fiffersley Park and St Thomas More School, all in Willenhall, were told to stay home for the day.

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Community garden proposal on eyesore site

DERELICT allotment land in Darlaston is being cleaned up and could be turned into a community garden. The eyesore site in Herberts Park Road has been plagued by fly-tipping in recent years.

Walsall Council's Street Pride officers have begun clearing rubbish from the area and there will be a public meeting for residents to have their say on its future use.

Councillor Anthony Harris, Walsall leisure and culture boss, said: "It is such a shame that this former allotment land has become such an eyesore."

"Our greenspace service has been talking to

residents, councillors and partners about the best way to transform this spot and a community garden has been suggested.

Difference

"The local community is key to giving this plot a new lease of life and we want to work with local people to make a real difference to a spot that has undoubtedly caused them problems. I would love them to take ownership of this, with our support."

Cllr Harris added that there had been local concern that the land could be used as a play area

or a skate park but added "this is not our intention".

The project is being led by Alison Bate, community gardens officer, who said that a secure community garden could be used as a shared social area.

"It could become an informal space with grass, trees, shrubs and flowers or as a collective area for food growing," she said.

"Any key decisions over its elements and features will be shaped by the community as our aim is to support its long term sustainability."

Man who pestered pensioner is jailed

A FATHER who harassed an 80-year-old man into handing over at least £5,000 by pestering him has been put behind bars.

Richard Featherstone preyed on the "vulnerability and generosity" of Walsall pensioner Richard Williams by making repeated requests for money. He sent voice and text messages throughout the day and night asking for money.

Featherstone, of Whitehall Road, Palfrey, originally denied a charge of harassment between June and November this year. However, the 35-year-old changed his plea and was on Friday jailed for 11 weeks, ordered to pay £400 compensation and given a two-year restraining order.

Miss Val Hart, prosecuting, said Mr Williams suffers health problems including his heart. She told the court the

Centre will help more elderly folk live at home

SPECIALIST equipment for elderly people in Walsall will be moved into a purpose-designed building costing £325,000 by spring.

The Integrated Community Equipment Service, currently provided in three factory units on the Bentley Lane Industrial Estate, will stock aids to help people continue living at home, from walking sticks to commodes and shower chairs.

It will also include a new Wheelchair Service Clinic with its own technician and stores, a decontamination unit so that all equipment can be cleaned and re-used, and bed and mattress store.

The new 10,000 sq ft base will be at Electrium Point, in Forge Lane, Willenhall, and is being provided by Walsall Council and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust.

Growing demand for this type of equipment means the service needs to expand.

men had known each other for around four or five years. She said it was "constant pestering" which included notes being pushed through the door.

The prosecutor added that Mr Williams said he felt intimidated and just wanted to be left alone.

Distress

Featherstone accepted receiving between £5,000 and £6,000 although it was originally believed it could have been more than £9,000.

In a victim statement Mr Williams said he was disappointed Featherstone had tried to play down the true extent of the crime.

The statement read: "It has caused me great distress and also ill health. I am 80, going to court at my time of life is not something I should have to have faced. I live a simple, humble existence."

Mr Brij Chaudhry, defending, said Featherstone previously helped Mr Williams and did chores. When he started asking for money there were no threats of violence.

"Mr Featherstone in hindsight accepts the impact this behaviour has had on the victim. He is not very proud of himself, he is truly sorry and he is truly ashamed."

Sweet sound of success



Hannah Munn, Emily Davies and Hannah Grant show off the best newcomer trophy with fellow St Mary's The Mount choir members at their Merry Hill victory

YOUNG Singers at a Walsall school hit all the right notes when they won a carol singing title at a Black Country shopping centre.

Children from St Mary's The Mount are celebrating after being crowned the best newcomer of 2012 at the keenly contested Merry Hill Christmas Choir competition.

A choir made up of 35 youngsters, aged from seven to 10, sang at the busy shopping centre, beating strong competition from around 40 other schools.

Headteacher Catherine Amos praised pupils at the Jesson Road school for their hard work.

Experience

"We are delighted with the recent success of the choir," she said.

"They have worked hard each week to ensure that a high standard was achieved and we are really proud of them."

"The children and staff have really enjoyed this experience."

The singers performed three original festive songs, written especially for the occasion by one of their teachers, Rebecca Thompson.

As part of the school's Christmas countdown, the choir will sing at the Orchard School in Oldbury and for the charity Mencap.

Father told to pay the victim of dog attack

A FATHER-of-three who admitted being in charge of a dog which was dangerously out of control in a public place was told to pay £50 compensation to the victim the animal attacked.

A Staffordshire bull terrier-type dog bit Nicholas Dean twice on the thigh as he walked past Robert Kraus's home in Charles Street.

Mrs Maggie Meakin, prosecuting, told Walsall Magistrates Court that the dog, on an extendable lead, was described as muscular with a powerful jaw.

Clip

"It bit and held on to Mr Dean's right thigh," she said.

The dog, which was just over a year old, has since been put down.

Kraus admitted being in charge of a dog which was dangerously out of control in a public place on June 7.

When Kraus was interviewed by police he claimed that he had tried to pull the dog off.

Mr John Walker, for Kraus, said he had forgotten to put a clip on the lead which would stop it from extending too far.

Kraus was given a six-month conditional discharge, and told to pay £50 compensation to Mr Dean and £85 costs.

Car park to make way for scheme

AN eyesore empty car park that has been a blight on the Walsall landscape for more than a decade is finally set to be bulldozed.

The car park in Lower Hall Lane will be knocked down under latest plans.

The move forms part of the £12 million redevelopment of St Matthew's Quarter. Norton & Proffitt wants to demolish a two-storey car park, which has been a magnet for yobs and has been shut since the late 1990s.

Buildings fronting High Street, Digbeth and Lower Hall Lane would also be demolished for a restaurant and 11 shops to be built, creating 200 jobs.

Councillor Mohammed Arif said: "This is most welcome in an area that has seen neglect over the past few years."

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Mr Walters from Walsall - The transformation from old to new looks brilliant, would not hesitate to recommend to others

Over half of borough's wardens go in new cuts

THE number of park rangers in Walsall will be more than halved under new cost-cutting plans being considered by Walsall Council.

They will fall from 23 to 10 from next April.

The plans have prompted fears about increased anti-social behaviour in parks and nature reserves.

About £400,000 is due to be cut from the Street Pride department's budget.

The council insists that there will still be a strong presence in the borough's parks and environmental staff will be trained in enforcement action currently being undertaken by the rangers.

A report to the council's cabinet states: "It will put more people on more parks on a continuous basis Monday to Friday."

"A reduced resource over the weekends will maintain some visual presence."

Campaigners against the plans have established Save Walsall's Green Spaces and Countryside Services.

Linda Mason, from the group, said: "If these figures are correct, I am flabbergasted. I can't see how a park ranger service can be operated."

Vandals, arsonists and fly-tippers have targeted borough parks just under 350 times in 12 months.

The council needs to save £13 million overall in the next financial year.

Headcam idea – see page 5

Work starts on £100,000 park revamp

Improvement work costing about £100,000 has started at a Darlaston park, with a new artwork selected to be the centrepiece of its transformation.

Kings Hill Park is undergoing the revamp after contractors arrived on site last week.

They are expected to be there until March 31 next year. New footpaths are being laid, the play area will be revamped, and frontages to the park will be overhauled.

Extra security gates and fences will also be installed at the park, which has been targeted by vandals and yobs in the past.

Designs for a £12,000 artwork, featuring a globe on a plinth, have been selected.

Lucky dog stuns vets

VETS were stunned after a dog was run over and dragged beneath a car for 20ft – but came away unharmed.

The Jack Russell was hit by the vehicle in Well Lane, Bloxwich, at around 3.15pm on Thursday, and was caught beneath the car.

Firefighters had to be called in a 45-minute rescue operation to remove the dog.

A Bloxwich Fire Station spokesperson said: "We were called out as the dog was still under the car. The driver called, as he was still there and very shook up. The owner

wasn't around and he didn't have a collar, so we think he may have been a stray.

He was dragged for around 20ft, and yet came out with just a few cuts. The vets were absolutely excellent. So we'd like to thank Melbourne Vets."

Veterinary nurse Lauren Todd said: "The police had contacted us saying they were bringing in a dog with a broken back and broken legs. Firefighters brought him in a blanket and when they put him on the table he got up and started walking around."

Drinker lashed out

A DRINKER who lashed out with a beer glass in his hand has avoided jail.

Lee Mitchell saw red when his girlfriend was pushed into a pillar at the Linford Arms in Cannock. Mr Paul Farrow, prosecuting, told Stafford Crown Court that Mitchell hit out at another customer, Lee Davies, who felt a glass smash on his head. That was the start of the violence as Mr Davies tried to get back at the man who hit him.

After the attack on May 6, Mr Davies needed nine stitches in a wound around his

left ear, which has left some scarring.

Mitchell, aged 42, of Littlewood Road, Walsall, who admitted a charge of affray, was given a community order with 133 hours unpaid community work.

Judge Simon Tonking told him: "The man who was injured was among those who were being aggressive towards you. A point came after your girlfriend had been pushed by Mr Davies, you reacted not in defence but in anger. It is accepted you didn't deliberately use the glass."

Stolen cable leads to disruption on the M6

DRIVERS are being warned of up to eight weeks of disruptions on the M6 as highways bosses have to replace street light cabling stolen by metal thieves.

Lanes will be closed during the work, which will take place along the busy stretch of the motorway between junction 10 at Walsall and 10a at Essington.

The cable has been stolen from the motorway verge meaning some of the lighting has been knocked out. Replacement work was due to start this week and is expected to take until early February to be fully completed.

It will impact on both the northbound and southbound carriageways of the M6 stretch, which is used by 160,000 motorists a day.

During parts of the scheme there will be night-time closures of the hard shoulder and lane one. It will be in both directions but restricted between Monday and Friday from 8pm to 5am.

Housing site may sell for £1

LAND earmarked for hundreds of new homes in Walsall could be sold for just £1, in a bid to help kickstart its multi-million pound regeneration.

Walsall Council is to dispose of the land for a nominal fee to push forward the development of more than 700 properties around the abandoned Goscote estate.

Walsall Housing Group is drawing up a revised scheme after moves to build on green belt land as part of a swap agreement were scrapped after more than 800 objections were lodged against the loss of The Lea.

Now, moves to scrap building on the green belt and incorporate all of the former Goscote estate will see the amount of council-owned land fall from 37 to 18 per cent.

Members of the council cabinet were yesterday (Wednesday) being recommended to support the regeneration plan by selling off the freehold for £1.

Safer

Highways Agency project sponsor Purnima Kaul said: "Once complete, street lighting will be operational again making the road safer during the hours of darkness and in poor weather conditions."

"We will aim to complete the work as quickly as possible to minimise disruption for road users."

"Lane closures will be necessary, however, as it will be safer for both the workers and road users while the work is carried out."

"The work is expected to cause some disruption but we do not expect this to be significant. We have also written to local residents to advise them that there may be some increased noise levels while we carry out this work."

There have been a series of metal thefts along the motorway.

Santas on the run for hospice



Acorns Children's Hospice chief executive David Strudley starts the Santas On The Run race at Walsall Arboretum

A RECORD number of Santa-suited runners lined up for an annual Yuletide race at Walsall Hospice in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice.

Organisers were delighted when 260 entrants turned up – more than half as many again on last year's numbers.

This was the third Santas On The Run event in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice and the first time it had included a 5k route as well as a 2k run.

Instructors from newly-opened Pure Gym in Walsall led the warm-up at yesterday's spectacle.

At the grand age of 81, Gordon Woodlands was the oldest runner. The retired postman from Western Avenue, Bentley, regularly enters races to raise money for Diabetes UK in memory of his late wife and youngest daughter who

both suffered from the disease. He said: "This is my eighth run this year. Luckily I'm quite fit from my 20 years as a postie and it's a healthy pastime."

The Walker family, from Gaydon Road, Aldridge, donned costumes large and small as parents Dawn and Steve took part in the festive race with sons Sam, aged 11, and seven-year-old Jack, who both attend Leighwood School, Aldridge.

Dawn said: "This year we've tried to get a bit fitter, so the Santa run is a culmination of that."

Acorns fundraising manager Paula Mitchell added: "It was a brilliant turnout and a really great day."

The runners have collectively pledged around £6,000 towards the charity.

NEWS in brief

Scouts set to get old council depot

A 99-year lease on a former council depot looked set to be granted to a Walsall Scout group yesterday (Wednesday).

The 38th Walsall (1st Walsall Wood) Scout Group is poised to take on the former Oak Park Depot in Brownhills Road, Walsall Wood.

Walsall's cabinet was recommended to approve the lease at this week's meeting.

The grant of a long lease will allow the group to apply for funding to construct a new headquarters on site, a report says.

It explains that a peppercorn rent will be charged on the site, meaning the council will forgo a potential capital receipt for the site of £80,000.

Festive party held to thank children

MORE than 200 children descended on Willenhall Memorial Park for a festive party.

Children's rides, face painters and Father Christmas were at the Pinson Road site for children from three Willenhall schools to enjoy.

Organisers said the party was to thank youngsters. Throughout the year pupils from Fibbersley Park, Barcroft and New Invention primaries, have been helpers at the park.

Reading charity in call for volunteers

CHARITY Beanstalk, formerly known as Volunteer Reading Help, is recruiting helpers to give one-to-one reading support for primary school children.

Volunteers get training and will have an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check arranged for them. Recruitment is being held today (Thursday) at the Vine Restaurant, Lower Hall Street, Walsall, 10am to noon. Call 01902 866493 for details.

It's a world of song

PARK Hall Junior Academy will be holding their annual Christmas concert on Wednesday, December 19, at Walsall Town Hall from 6.30pm. Children will be singing Christmas songs in different languages.

Meeting on Europe

WEST Midlands UKIP Euro MP Mike Natrass will be holding a public meeting at the Lyndon House Hotel, in Upper Rushall Street, Walsall, on Tuesday at 7.30pm.

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



THANKS for the suggestion but William and Kate are not going to call the kid Josey Wales.

□□□□□□□□

AND now a few words on the health benefits of being a lardarse: "If she (Kate) wasn't so damn skinny she'd have a bit of fat to cope with the weight loss and dehydration. She doesn't, hence the need to hospitalise her as her thinness increases her risk factor." (From Sky News website, where all opinions are equally valid).

□□□□□□□□

REJOICE, for the law will be changed to prevent females being discriminated against in the succession to the British Crown. Whatever sex it happens to be, William and Kate's baby will one day be monarch, because it will be the oldest of their children. Is that fair? By automatically crowning the oldest child, we are swapping one form of discrimination (sexism) for another (ageism). Why should the second or third child not be monarch? How dare the system deny them the top job just because, by an accident of history, they are younger? If my argument strikes you as nonsense today, bear in mind that the very idea of sexually-equal succession would have seemed treason, or even heresy, only 50 years ago. William and Kate's child is unlikely to take the throne for another half-century and you can bet your life that our views and values that seem so reasonable to us in 2012 will seem bonkers to our great-great grandchildren.

□□□□□□□□

ACTUALLY, the best and most traditional way to choose the monarch is for the rival claimants to assemble about 20,000 terrified peasants each on a bit of open ground (Edgehill, Towton, etc) and command them to bash each other's brains out. Winner takes all.

□□□□□□□□

A READER writes: "If journalists are instructed to support one political group over another, is that freedom of the Press or a form of journalistic dictatorship?"

Actually, it is freedom of the Press. It is the freedom of any editor or proprietor to support any political party they choose. The journalist is free to work for any newspaper he likes. The readers are free to buy newspapers that reflect their politics.

Many British newspapers, both national and regional, were born out of political activism and the desire to change the world. That is why we have such a rich and varied Press. Television broadcasters are bound by law to be politically balanced, and are overseen by Ofcom. Newspapers are free of such rules but we have plenty of enemies who would relish the Press being brought under Ofcom's control.

"Political balance" has a sweet, reasonable ring but it is the antithesis of a free Press. And if we went down that road, with every column inch analysed for political bias and balance, Britain would only need one newspaper. We could call it Truth or as they say in Russia, Pravda.

□□□□□□□□

A SURVEY reveals that more than two-thirds of workers are embarrassed by their jobs and lie to make them sound more interesting. I had a pal who got a job putting up "for sale" signs for an estate agent. He called himself an information technologist.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Bid for foundation status is to be delayed

WALSALL Manor Hospital's bid to become a foundation trust and have more control over its own affairs has been delayed after it failed to hit accident and emergency targets.

The application to become a foundation trust will now not be submitted until 2013.

It emerged last week the Manor has fallen short of its four-hour A&E waiting time target.

Concerns over Walsall Health-

care Trust's current financial position have also been highlighted as a reason for the deferral.

Meeting

The decision was reached following a meeting between the trust's board and the Strategic Health Authority last month.

A report by Dawn Clift, director of governance, said: "The meeting concluded that the trust made good

progress in improving the quality of care delivered to patients.

"Challenges were recognised in relation to the current financial position and failure to achieve the A&E 24-hour target at the end of quarter two. It was agreed that the application to the Department of Health and subsequently Monitor be deferred until early 2013/14 when the outturn position of 2013/14 would be apparent."

The trust has also agreed a revised forecast surplus for this financial year of £3.7m - £1m lower than first anticipated.

Chief executive of Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust Richard Kirby said: "This is a result of a deliberate decision rather than a slide into trouble." He added that the proposed date for submitting the bid would be "three or four" months later than planned.

Manor boss promises hospital is improving

IMPROVEMENTS have been made but the hard work is not over yet, says the boss of Walsall Manor Hospital after a report revealed higher than expected death rates.

Chief executive Richard Kirby has insisted a host of improvement measures have been taken to lower death rates at the Moor Road hospital, and these have included investing in more staff and improving end-of-life care.



Richard Kirby - boss says a lot more can be done to improve care at the Manor

The Doctor Foster Hospital Guide last week revealed the number of patient deaths was above expected levels in 2011/12.

The guide said Walsall Manor had a hospital standardised mortality rate of 117 between April 2011 and March 2012, compared to an expected level of 100.

But the rate had reduced to 92 between April and August this year.

"This is about getting the quality of care right for people as a whole," said Mr Kirby.

"I would like to say thank you to the teams who have worked really hard on this for the past 12 months.

Consultants

"It's not to say the job is done. There's still a lot more that can be done on this."

He revealed £800,000 has been invested in nursing staff - the equivalent of 41 extra posts - over the past two years, while eight new medical consultants are to be taken on by April.

Mr Kirby said every death at the hospital was now reviewed independently and there was increased senior medical input at weekends.

He said the actual number of deaths at the hospital had been lower this year, while improvements have been made in infection control at the hospital.

He said there was a 90 per cent drop in C. diff cases in April to September this year compared to the same period in 2011, and a 50 per cent drop in pressure ulcers.

Patients back A&E

PATIENTS rate the A&E department at Walsall Manor Hospital as the best in the region, says a survey.

In Care Quality Commission (CQC) research, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust had a score from patients of 7.6 out of 10. It came a day after details emerged that the Hospital's A&E department had failed to hit a four-hour waiting time target.

Patients in the CQC survey were asked to rate their overall experience in an A&E department out of 10.

Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust and the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust each scored 7.5

Life-saving machine at pool



Walsall Gala Baths lifeguard Lewis Prince with Warren Appleby from the British Heart Foundation and Phil Jevon from Walsall Manor Hospital with the machine

STAFF at Walsall's Gala Baths have welcomed a vital piece of life-saving kit.

The £1,000 defibrillator will be the first at any baths or leisure centre in the borough. It is hoped the machine will be installed before Christmas.

Duty manager Darren Henderson said staff were delighted to have the equipment. "Staff are still receiving their training on

it but as soon as that is complete, it will be installed," he said. "It will be used not only for people at the baths or in the gym but anyone passing in the road outside in the event of anyone having a cardiac arrest."

The defibrillator has been funded by the British Heart Foundation, which is committed to placing more of the automatic machines in public place.

Hi-tech plan for cutting traffic jams at junction

A JUNCTION in Walsall has been earmarked for a congestion-busting scheme to ease delays and boost safety. New technology is set to be installed to reduce regular hold-ups in Corporation Street, Caldmore.

Improvements to the route at the junction with Wednesbury Road could see software installed to trigger traffic lights depending on traffic flow. It would also see pedestrian crossings with kerbside detectors as part of the £260,000 scheme due to be completed next summer.

It is part of improvements costing more than £500,000 in Caldmore which has already seen similar crossings put in place in Caldmore Green, West Bromwich Street and Spout Lane.

Stuck

It also means drivers avoid being stuck at red lights when no pedestrian is actually using the crossing.

Councillor Mohammed Arif, who has been pushing for action, said the long-term plan was to widen the junction as buses trying to turn right from Corporation Street into Wednesbury Road also caused a build-up of vehicles.

"The long-term solution is the widening of the junction and we will, as ward councillors, keep working with our highways officers, traders association, residents and Centro to make the case for this," he added.

New homes scheme for scrap yard

THE redevelopment of a scrap metal yard to create almost 40 homes in Willenhall will improve the area, say the applicants.

Plans to transform the site in Noose Lane will see buildings demolished to create 39 two to four-bedroom houses. Monmore Recycling will transfer to its site in Wolverhampton.

A new access would be created off Noose Lane under the proposals.

The application has been submitted via agent Paul Harris on behalf of Cad-square Midlands Ltd. He said: "The site is located in a predominantly residential area and the current use is deemed alien and a bad neighbour to the existing properties. And as such would suit a redevelopment for residential purposes."

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Benefits claimant watched by DWP

A BENEFITS cheat claimed to have mobility issues to get disability living allowance but was surveillance showed he was capable of walking long distances.

Tony Plant, of Willenhall, falsely claimed more than £4,000 between January and October last year, Walsall Magistrates Court heard.

The 53-year-old started claiming benefits in February 2008 but failed to tell the relevant authorities when his situation changed.

Ms Rebecca Smith, prosecuting on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), said Plant made the claim on the basis he had severely restricted mobility.

She said: "He was awarded the high-rate mobility and middle-rate care.

Surveillance was carried out on Plant after information was received that put his disability claim in doubt.

"He was capable of walking reasonably long distances," said Ms Smith. "He walked normally and without the use of aids."

She said the fraudulent claim amounted to £4,186.70 and the Department for Work and Pensions would be claiming the money back.

Declare

Plant, of Cedar Road, admitted one charge of failing to declare a change of circumstances.

Mrs Sheila Hicklin, mitigating, said Plant's conditions had improved but he had "bad days and good days". He was now in employment and no longer claiming any benefits.

Plant was given a 12-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay £85 costs.

Speaking after the case, Welfare Reform Minister Lord David Freud said: "It's cases like these that show us why welfare reform is needed."

Winter bazaar will help scouts

DELVES Green Winter Bazaar is being held on Saturday from 1pm to 5pm at Halliwell Brookes Center, in Delves Green Road, Walsall.

It's free entry and there will be entertainment from singer Stacey.

A raffle and stalls will be run in aid of the 6th Walsall Scouts.

Rain and frost combine to produce a first-rate crop this year Christmas trees are tops after a summer soaking

WE would probably rather forget the washout summer, but the bad weather has meant this year's crop of Christmas firs are top of the tree.

The damp summer coupled with the recent drop in temperature means real Christmas trees are more likely to hold onto their needles over the festive period.

That is the verdict of expert growers in the West Midlands who are delighted with the quality of this year's crop.

Richard Simkin of Essington Fruit Farm said: "Christmas trees are one of the crops where the dreadful summer did them a favour. There's less of a problem with needles dropping off because they've been well watered. The frost is also good for needle retention."

Aroma

Believe it or not, Christmas trees are also subject to changes in fashion. There are lots of different trees but they break down into three main types – spruces, pines and firs.

The Norway spruce is the traditional tree and is usually the cheapest with the famous "real tree" aroma. It is still the most popular tree accounting for about 60 per cent of sales.

Blue spruces are denser with silver-blue prickly needles while the Serbian spruce is a slimmer tree with softer, floppier branches. All spruce trees may shed needles if not kept in water.

Firs do not tend to shed their needles as much but they are more difficult to grow and therefore more expensive. The Nordmann fir is the most popular. Branches are horizontal and well spaced out allowing room for decorations. A Fraser fir is a smaller tree with upward-pointing branches which makes it a bit slimmer.

White firs are pale silver with long needles and while not commonly grown, they look different to others and stand out.

Pines have long needles which do not



Tree-mendous – Richard Simkin of Essington Fruit Farm

shed. They are denser and have tended to be more popular in America.

But Mr Simkin said: "They're going out of fashion a bit over here now. There's not as much space between the branches as some of the other type of tree so decorations tend to be on the outside rather than hanging down. It's difficult as a grower because it takes seven years for a tree to be ready and you have to predict what's going to be in fashion that far in advance."

Trees are selling well across the region.

Which tree is right for you?

The Spruce

- The traditional choice of Christmas tree for many years
- Light green foliage and sharp needles
- Declining in popularity due to other species becoming cheaper

The Nordmann Fir

- The Nordmann Fir is UK's best-selling tree
- Deep green foliage and bigger, softer needles than spruces
- Can keep its needles until long after Christmas if cared for properly
- Fraser Firs have slightly shorter needles and a greyish underside

The Pine

- Strong branches with twisted green-blue needles
- Known as good for keeping its needles
- They have a very pleasant scent
- Pines are a popular choice in America

At Walsall Garden Centre there were around 250 left. But director Sarah Swain said: "We're expecting to sell out."

Popular

And Pat Roberts, of Roberts Farm Shop in Kingswinford, said: "A lot of people are having real trees this year. Because of the weather they are looking very good. The non-shed trees are doing particularly well." She said the Nordmann fir had been the most popular for the last five years.

Mr Simkin offered advice for anyone considering buying a tree, which varies in price from around £10 to more than £80.

He said: "Always buy the freshest tree you can get and keep it watered."

"It is like a cut flower and will keep fresh best in water."

"To maximise water uptake cut an inch off the base of the trunk and place in a water-holding stand. You can improvise with a bucket and some gravel."

Behind-the-scenes talks to boost jobs

LOTS of "behind-the-scenes" work is taking place to get businesses in to Darlaston Enterprise Zone in a bid to unlock thousands of new jobs in the borough.

Fifteen patches of land make up the Black Country Enterprise Zone, with one firm in "advanced discussions" about moving in. Up to 1,918 new jobs could be created in Darlaston by 2015 thanks to the enterprise zone. Firms in the zone benefit from a tax break, lower business rates and simplified planning rules.

Regeneration chief Adrian Andrew said: "Businesses have been provided with a set of incentives to make change happen, which includes the council agreeing to use its compulsory purchase powers and making a Local Development Order to simplify the planning process in this area of Darlaston."

"There is much work behind-the-scenes, talking to landowners to see how we can bring polluted brown field sites back into use. I personally have been to Westminster to meet with Black Country MPs to help fight our corner."

"This will help to potentially fast-track new developments that can bring jobs and underlines the point that Walsall is open for business."

Simpler planning rules, known as a local development order, were approved by government for the enterprise zone earlier this year.

It allows development for light industry, general industry and storage and distribution as well as waste management and waste treatment without the need for planning permission to be given.

The Enterprise Zone covers 40 acres of land either side of

the M6. A £26 million road improvement scheme in Darlaston and Bentley is also set to take place which will see major roads through the town built.

Empty

Meanwhile, two empty shops in Walsall town centre could be taken over in time for Christmas as part of an incentive scheme to reduce the number of vacant units.

Nine empty shops are currently up for grabs for businesses who want to move into the town under a £100,000 scheme being run by the local authority.

Three businesses have approached the council to open a shop in the town and it is hoped two will be in before December 25.

NEWS

in brief

Headcam bid to catch litter bugs

HEADCAMS on park rangers to catch people dropping litter in Walsall were part of a package of measures being considered by councillors last night (Wednesday).

An action plan to tackle the problem of litter has been drawn up. Being considered were body cameras, high-visibility patrols, additional ash trays and chewing gum bins on lamp posts and reward schemes to encourage children to throw away rubbish properly.

The litter working group's action plan is going before the council's decision-making cabinet.

Fair raising funds for two charities

A CHARITY Christmas fair will be held at St Paul's Church in Darwall Street, Walsall, on Saturday.

There will be stalls selling decorations, mulled wine and mince pies from 10am to 3.30pm and Father Christmas will meet youngsters.

Entrance is £1 and all visitors will be entered into a raffle to win a Christmas cake. Money raised goes towards CICRA and the Winnicott Foundation.

'Pop-up' shop to highlight designs

ARTISTS and designers who live in Walsall have started up a new enterprise that has opened its first 'one week only' shop.

The pop-up store by the group Create@48 is in the Saddlers Centre and is selling a selection of handmade gifts until Sunday. Items include ragdolls, artwork, textiles and jewellery.

Legion's Poppy Run raises £400

MEMBERS of the Royal British Legion branch in Aldridge are celebrating the success of last month's annual Poppy Run.

The event at Aldridge Airport saw 78 people complete the course raising £400 for the poppy appeal. The first runner back was Michael Morley while Carol Walker was the fastest walker.

Blood donor call

AN NHS blood donor session will be held on Monday at Walsall FC's Bescot Stadium at Bescot Crescent, from 1.30 to 3.30pm and 4.30 to 7.30pm. Make an appointment on 03001232323.

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NEWS

Babies that don't cry or need new nappies

AS 12-year-old Ellie Morris cuddles the bundle in her arms she can't help but smile, like any new mother.

However, luckily the Willenhall school girl won't have to miss any classes to look after her new baby, as the infant is actually made of vinyl.

Ellie is just one of the thousands of customers who are snapping up the life-like Reborn dolls from the Suzanne-Lewis shop in Cannock. The business was started six years ago by Suzanne Wood, who had launched a baby shop in Brownhills.

It was in September when she moved to her new site in Walsall Road, Cannock, and her shop is filled with dozens of the dolls as well as specially made clothes, hairbrushes, cribs and prams.

"Over the years I have seen how the Reborn Babies have helped make a lot of people happy," she says.

"However, when we are seen out in the street with our dolls we can get a lot of abuse as people don't understand - why is it fine for a man to collect matchbox cars, but not for us to have dolls?"

Cuddling

Suzanne says women who buy the dolls don't tend to push them in prams but get enjoyment from cuddling them.

"One customer was diagnosed with cancer and she just wanted something to cuddle, to give her some comfort," says Suzanne.

"There are women who have a reborn after they have lost babies - they don't get the doll to replace the baby but to help with the grief.

"When a woman holds a baby it releases oxytocin in the brain which is a hormone which makes people happy and relaxed."

"Ask anyone who holds a baby how they feel and they forget their worries and it makes them feel good."

Suzanne says she has always loved dolls.

"I was the youngest of four and my eldest sister Margaret used to buy them for me and I remember when I reached 11-years-old she said to me that I was too old to have dolls," she says.

"That was when I moved on to porce-



Willenhall school girl Ellie Morris with 'baby' Charlie

lain dolls and Ashton Drake collectable dolls. It wasn't long before I came across the Reborn dolls."

Suzanne opened a baby shop in Brownhills in 2005 after her father, Lewis and mother Joyce passed away leaving her some money.

"The first thing I did was open a baby shop - I had cribs and prams in the shop and used the Reborn dolls as models in them for demonstration purposes," says Suzanne, 46. "However, it wasn't long before people started asking me about the dolls."

Suzanne, who grew up in Aldridge going to Redhouse Primary and Aldridge Comprehensive School, says Reborn dolls are well-known now.

"People have them for lots of reasons. The dolls helped me get over the grief of losing my mum," she says.

"One lady bought one for her daughter's 21st birthday and it will be kept as a family heirloom. Also, we had one 14-year-old girl brought into the shop by her father as she was desperate for a baby and getting her a Reborn was a way of stopping her from getting pregnant too early."

Suzanne who has two sons - Nathan, 19, and Daniel, 17 - says people often think there is something wrong with a

woman who likes dolls. "Earlier this year I went on the TV show Daybreak and they sat me on the couch next to a psychiatrist - luckily the psychiatrist said it was natural to want to hold a baby and talked about the release of oxytocin," she says.

"It is amazing to see how people with dementia and Alzheimer's are helped by holding the dolls. With dementia people can revert back to their childhood, having a doll helps them cope."

"Once a month we have a dolly club where customers can bring along their Reborns, have a coffee and talk openly about their interest without being judged."

The dolls, which range from £120 to £500, take hours to create.

"A kit is made by someone sculpting a baby's arms, legs and head out of clay and then it is used as a mould to make the doll out of vinyl," says Suzanne.

"We then put the kits together and choose the eye colour, skin colour and hair. We can make it look how the customer wants."

Unique

"The painting takes several hours as we can put on 80 coats of paint, and each one has to be heat set in an oven."

"It usually takes us around two weeks to make each baby. Every one of them is unique. You can't even get twins to look exactly the same."

"The dolls are made to feel like they weigh around 8lb and the neck is floppy and needs supporting, just like with a baby."

She added: "Christmas is a very busy time for us and at the moment we are selling around three babies a day. However, the time it takes to make one means we don't make much money out of each doll - I do it because I have a passion for it."

Young Ellie Morris says she has been after a Reborn for two years and saved up her money to afford one, which she has named Charlie.

"I like that they look and feel real. It is nice to buy different clothes for Charlie for the day and night, and it is great to cuddle him in the evening while I'm watching TV," says Ellie, a pupil at Willenhall E-Act Academy.

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NEWS

11,000 'contaminated' bins were not emptied

Bargain store opens



Staff celebrate the opening of the new 99p store in New Road, Willenhall. Scores of shoppers queued to be among the first inside a new budget store, which has created 30 jobs.

The 99p store has opened up at the former Somerfield building in New Road, Willenhall. The store has undergone a £250,000 refit after standing empty since Somerfield closed its doors last September.

It became the 214th branch of 99p Stores to open in the UK and bosses

have pledged to open more stores in the West Midlands.

Hussein Lalani, boss of the chain, said increasing numbers of people were shopping at discount stores.

"It is now trendy to shop at 99p Stores," he said. "The days of coming in undercover are a thing of the very ancient past. The new Willenhall branch is a result of people power."

MORE than 11,000 bins went uncollected in Walsall during the first two weeks of a controversial recycling crackdown.

Thousands of green recycling bins were slapped with yellow stickers to show they would not be emptied after being found to contain the wrong items.

Officers - dubbed "binspectors" - travelled with crews to check residents' bins for the wrong items, such as food, household waste and black bags.

The move sparked a flurry of complaints, with some residents feeling penalised for trying to recycle.

Complaints

Sean Coughlan, deputy leader of Walsall's Labour group, said: "We find it really disappointing the council has allowed it to get to this stage."

"As local councillors we're all picking up complaints from our most vulnerable residents, who in many cases are elderly people."

Council chiefs say the zero-tolerance crackdown was introduced after increasing amounts of "contaminated" waste had to be sent to landfill, costing taxpayers money.

Figures from the first two weeks of the operation show more than 11,000 of the borough's 100,000 households fell foul of the crackdown.

Tom Ansell, environment chief, said: "We have two weeks of data on recycling collections since November 19. This tells us that an overwhelming majority of 89 per cent of residents are recycling properly."

"Every item improperly recycled effectively costs the taxpayer money."

See Letters - page 12

Rambling in Staffordshire

WALSALL Group of the Ramblers will be heading to Hednesford for a near seven mile circular walk on Sunday. Call the walk leader on 01543 876198 for details.

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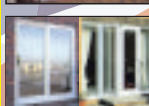
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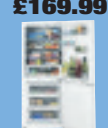
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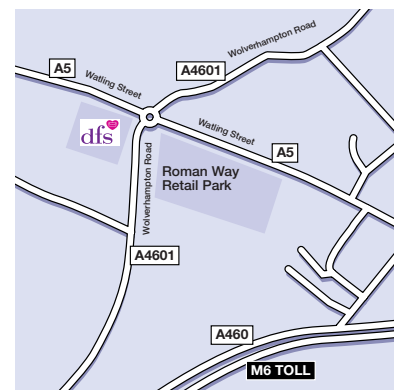
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NEWS

Students on parade to mark college graduation



Caps and gowns are worn as students and college staff pose for a picture on graduation day at Walsall College

HIGHER education students from Walsall College dressed in their caps and gowns paraded all the way to Walsall Town Hall for their formal graduation ceremony.

Hundreds of graduates set off from the college in Littleton Street West and marched proudly alongside their tutors through the streets of Walsall accompanied by the official Town Crier, Cyril Richardson.

The students received certificates for their achievements in courses such as Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Foundation Degrees in a range of subjects in front of friends and family. Special awards were also presented to students for outstanding achievement.

Walsall College Principal and Chief Executive Jatinder Sharma, said: "By choosing to study higher education,

our students have equipped themselves with the skills, knowledge and experience to succeed, as they go on to study at university or gain employment in their chosen industry.

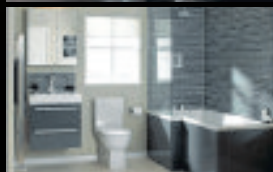
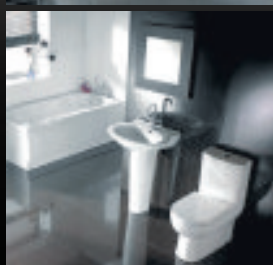
"All students who picked up their certificates at the ceremony should be extremely proud of their achievements and I speak on behalf of everybody at Walsall College when I wish them every success in the future."



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NEWS

Students dance for friends and family

DANCE students at Walsall College have shown off their skills performing a selection of routines.

Year one and two pupils held matinee and evening performances of the show titled Project Dance, at The Venue theatre space at Wisemore Campus, where they performed urban, contemporary and jazz dance routines for family and friends.

Quality

Dance tutor Leanne Lewis said: "The quality and range of work produced was of a high standard, with many pieces choreographed by students themselves."

"Not only were the shows a chance for family, friends and members of the public to see the students perform, the performances will also form part of their assessments."



Dance delight - Walsall College students perform one of their routines

Role model Jess wins young citizen award

THE MAYOR of Walsall has recognised the hard work and dedication of the town's long-serving young ambassador at the ninth annual civic awards.

Miss Teen Walsall, Jess Watts, aged 17, from Bloxwich was awarded the Young Citizen of the Year at the gala event at Bescot Stadium for her work on behalf of the borough.

During her two terms as youth ambassador she has helped at dozens of civic events and played a vital role in former mayor Garry Perry raising £43,000 for his chosen charities.

Opportunities

"Lots of opportunities have come my way since becoming Miss Teen Walsall, particularly being chosen as Young Ambassador to the two mayors," said Jess.

"I have had the opportunity to raise not only my own profile but that of the town and the young people of Walsall."

"I am extremely proud, the award means more to me than any pageant title, crown or sash as it is being recognised by local people for my efforts."

Mayor of Walsall, Councillor Dennis Anson works with Jess on a regular basis as part of his charity work in the borough. He said: "We couldn't have chosen anyone better for the position or the award. She is such a pleasant girl and a real role model for the young people of Walsall."



Miss Teen Walsall Jess Watts with her young citizen award presented at the borough's civic awards gala

Memories of 'Big Freeze' 50 years ago

If you think it has been cold recently, ask anyone aged over 60 about the winter they experienced half century ago.

A free-to-visit exhibition in Walsall Museum looks back at the winter of 1962-63, one of the coldest in recorded history.

It saw canals freeze solid, roads made impassable and trains buried in snow. The Arboretum lake turned into an ice rink and people went skiing on the Lickey Hills.

The display entitled 'The Big Freeze' has photographs and newspaper reports detailing how the town dealt with the exceptional cold and snow that came with it. A pair of ice skates and some of the essential woolly clothing from the period are among the items on display. The exhibition continues until January 5.

Store support

STAFF at Poundland in Walsall wore festive costumes and invited customers to enter a raffle, raising £953 for MacMillan Cancer Support.

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NEWS

Focus on success for a talented teenager



Work by photography student Ruby Jones, aged 15, features in a magazine

A STUDENT from Brownhills has snapped her way to third place in a national photography competition.

Ruby Jones, aged 15, was invited to a glamorous awards ceremony at the Strand Gallery in Westminster, where her entry was put on display.

She and other Year 11 students from Shire Oak Academy had entered the Economic and Social Research Council's contest earlier this year. Their challenge was to express their views of society through photography.

Ruby said: "When I sent off the images, I thought nothing of it and forgot about the whole thing until I received a phone call telling me that I had won a prize in the competition."

"Seeing my picture on the wall in this gallery was a kind of overwhelming feeling. It was even better when professional photographers stood and admired my image, then spoke to me about what effects I had used."

David Willets MP, Government minister for universities and science, presented the award to Ruby. Her photograph was featured in the annual economics magazine Britain In 2013.

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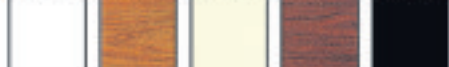
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LETTERS

Van ruins park paths

I HAVE been e-mailing the council over the newly completed paths in King George's Park, Bloxwich.

It seems that managers are allowing litter collectors, who empty bins around the park perimeter, to travel in a big van which travels along the perimeter path.

The problem is that it is too wide and is churning up the grass either side of the path and covering the path with mud.

Divot depths are increasing and the muck is everywhere.

My dogs and I get filthy...which I think the path was designed to stop. I have e-mailed twice and got no response.

The paths are there for the public, surely, not for idle walk-avoiding bin-emptying employee people.

I'd gladly swap my job to relieve the workers - and the public and park visitors from their poor performance!

NICK HILL
Bealeys Lane,
Bloxwich

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

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expressandstar.co.uk](mailto:walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk)

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

School choir set a great example

AT THE excellent 'Darlaston Diamonds' celebration event at Darlaston Town Hall, organised by Walsall Housing Group and local partners, the large audience were entertained by a lively musical performance from the school choir of Moorcroft Wood Primary School, Moxley.

Headteacher Andy Nicholls and staff must be congratulated for their efforts in encouraging such an enthusiastic, energised and tuneful choir. Everyone involved, pupils, parents and staff, should be proud as the choir stole the show! With a modern choice of songs the choir were able to show the large audience how much they enjoyed performing. The solo performers set a very high standard for their friends to follow. The choir deserved the applause and praise received from the crowd.

I hope the choir goes on to perform its repertoire for more lucky audiences. Onward and upwards for the choir. What a great example for other schools to encourage young people to take up music and enjoy the thrill of live musical performance. Well done everyone in the choir. Well done Moorcroft Wood Primary School.

COUNCILLOR DOUG JAMES
Horton Street
Walsall

Public relations wrecked

WHY does Walsall keep shooting itself in the foot?

Firstly, to remove the seats in Park Street and replace them with those black coffin-like cuboids was unhelpful to those who need to sit somewhere sturdy for a few minutes before moving on.

They have no drainage, gather the puddles, are too low and have no backs. Designed to drive yet more visitors away from the town centre?

Secondly, having just watched the 'Rubbish Police' dealing with a pensioner neighbour, I find it exasperating that the council wreck community relations further by this heavy-handed Jobsworth behaviour.

Our neighbourhood is very good at putting bins out each week. To turn away a bin that is largely in order is stupid as many bins may contain wrong rubbish items that the scrutineers about our streets did not see.

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CLUB NEWS

Musicians
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CHASE TERRACE LADIES

EVERYONE brought in food and the club provided the drinks for a marvellous time at our Christmas social evening.

Entertainment was provided by Rob Norman, a talented keyboard player, and Hannah, a beautiful singer, who treated members with songs from shows.

Some of our ladies had recently been to see Les Misérables at the Stafford Gatehouse Theatre and they experienced some wonderful reminders of that show.

It was a special evening for all of us and we also enjoyed singing along with some Christmas carols and other songs.

Much laughter ensued when we realised that most of us could only remember the first verse of these well-known songs.

Sixteen ladies went to a special evening at Bon Marche, Cannock, on November 27 where we had a chance to purchase clothes. Staff provided nibbles and a raffle with £32 going to Air Ambulance along with £57 raised by Beth Poole's hamper. We will add to this the money collected in lieu of Christmas cards on the social evening. Many thanks to Paul, the caretaker, for his help.

Today (Thur) we are holding our Christmas Meal at The Terrace. Our first meeting next year is on January 17 when the National Trust will provide a talk on Calke Abbey.

Cake helps with silver celebration



Celebration - volunteer Linda Brow, member Linda Dicks and organiser Judy Winter

A QUARTER of a century of mutual support has been celebrated at Rugeley and District Stroke Club. Members of the club meet every week at the Lea Hall Miners Welfare Centre but celebrated their 25-year milestone with a lunch at Shugborough Hall.

Since 1987, when it was founded by social services worker Gerald Lewis, the club has laid on activities, support and guidance for local stroke sufferers. Original organiser Betty Williams was a guest of honour at the lunch. Her successor Judy Winter said it was

RUGELEY AND DISTRICT STROKE CLUB

a great treat for the club's 45 members, carers and volunteers.

The club raises money for its activities but it recently enjoyed a welcome boost with a £650 donation by town councillor Geoff Martin. However, it desperately needs volunteers to help with the activities and transport. Contact Judy on 01889 583517.

Guilds enjoy carol service

WEST STAFFORD- SHIRE FEDERATION OF THE TWG

again the Marston Singers delighted us with singing their festive selection of carols and as always it was a pleasure to listen to.

Mrs Jean Parsons, the fed-

eration chairman gave a vote of thanks and invited everyone to stay for coffee and mince pies and a chat to catch up with friends before leaving to go Christmas shopping.

We are now looking forward to our visit to Harrogate to attend the national AGM next year.

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NEW ALBUMS

The new kings of easy listening reign supreme

THERE was Mantovani, then James Last and now Andre Rieu and his Johann Strauss Orchestra are the undisputed kings of easy listening music with 30 million albums sold.

His new *Magic of the Movies* collection features the violinist performing favourite romantic film themes, from *My Heart Will Go On* (Titanic) to *Once Upon A Time In The West* via *Romeo and Juliet's* Love Theme.

The Dutch master of the waltz will be packing the LG Arena three times over from December 18 to 20.

More movie magic, this time from *The John Wilson Orchestra with Rodgers & Hammerstein At The Movies*, an album eagerly-awaited by those who enjoyed Wilson's 2010 BBC Prom based upon the duo's music.

Heroes

John Wilson has done so much to rescue the classic movie musical scores and this is a lush treat from the Oklahoma Overture to *Climb Ev'ry Mountain*. Featured singers include Julian Ovenden and Love Never Dies star Sierra Boggess.

Smooth-voiced Scottish crooner Todd Gordon teams up with *The Royal Air Force Squadrons* for big band swing on fundraising album *Helping the Heroes*, in support of Help for Heroes.

He sings standards such as *The Best Is Yet To Come*



The undisputed king of easy listening – Dutch violinist Andre Rieu



Tributes to Elvis and the Stones from star tenor Alfie Boe on his album

and *The Summer Wind* and also duets with guest singers Carol Kidd, Jacqui Dankworth, Janet Seidel, Eddi Reader and, on a zingy *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*, the always excellent Clare Teal.

Alfie Boe is fast becoming Britain's favourite tenor, a position probably cemented by the affable, bearded singer's summer performance at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee concert.

On *Storyteller* the former mechanic from Blackpool lends his operatic vocals to his favourite songs. So instead of classics and show tunes we get his versions of Elvis Presley's *I Can't Help Falling In Love* With You and, as performed for the Queen, *It's Now Or Never*.

He is also a Rolling Stones fan, covering Angie and

Shine A Light.

He sings at Birmingham NIA on March 22.

The first friar to land a recording deal, *Friar Alessandro* (Brustenghi), from the friary in Italy founded by Saint Francis of Assisi has a rich tenor voice.

Sacred

On his debut *Voice From Assisi* he sings sacred music, both old and modern, including favourite hymn *Make Me A Channel of Your Peace*, a prayer attributed to Saint Francis.

Under the baton of Gareth Malone, no fewer than 24 *Military Wives* choirs – that's 760 singers – take part in *Stronger Together*, the follow up to their hugely successful *In My Dreams*.

It includes a revamped version of Gary Barlow's Diamond Jubilee anthem

Sing and Take That's *Rule The World*, plus versions of Richard Marx's *Right Here Waiting*, Barry Manilow's *One Voice* and festive favourite *In The Bleak Midwinter*.

Mentor Malone has also co-written two pop songs for the *Wives*, *Stronger Together* and the melancholy *Counting Time*.

Caro Emerald Presents *Drum Rolls & Heart Breaks* is an enjoyable 2 CD collection of vintage jazz and swing tunes from the 1930s to '60s, ranging from The Andrews Sisters and their inspiration The Boswell Sisters to Billie Holiday and Django Reinhardt, Dean Martin and Doris Day.

The special bonus is Dutch pop-jazz singer Caro Emerald's cover of Dream A Little Dream Of Me.

Leon Burakowski

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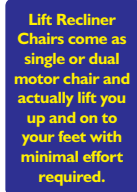


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FOCUS ON PELSALL

New boards at academy help project for Africans

A SCHOOL in Pelsall has helped raise money and awareness for a project in Africa through the purchase of new white boards.

Shelfield Community Academy in Pelsall, Walsall decided they needed to refresh their selection of interactive white boards and vice-principal Ian Barton decided to choose Steljes, who were donating money to charity Street Child Africa from every interactive whiteboard they sold during the summer.

Thanks to the purchase of the boards by schools, the company based in Surrey was able to raise more than £47,000 for the cause.

Street Child Africa was the chosen as the charity to benefit because of its proven effectiveness in helping children in Africa with a route into education.

Wind concert in the church

MUSICIANS from Bridgton Concert Show Band will be putting on a performance on Saturday at St Michael's and All Saints Church in Pelsall.

The wind ensemble will be playing a selection of tunes at the church in Hall Lane from 7.30pm. Admission costs £5. For more information call the parish office on (01922) 685666.

Doctors move in as village's new centre opens to patients

THE GPs have finally moved into Pelsall's new community health centre after a delay but the adjoining library and children's centre will not be open until early in the new year.

The £4.5 million pound centre was handed over to the council by Birmingham-based Construction Firm ISG on November 30, a month after the original deadline.

GPs Dr W J Bevan and Dr S Sameja moved in to their state-of-the-art facility last week.

But work in unlikely to be completed on the library and children's centre until the end of January.

Demolition

With the end of the first phase of the buildings construction complete, work can now get underway on the demolition of the old doctors' surgery to make way for 30 parking spaces.

Councillor Garry Perry said: "The Pelsall Village Centre is the best Christmas present we could have delivered for our community."

"I wholeheartedly thank all those involved from inception, to planning stage,

by Tom Mason

the building and completion."

Councillor Anthony Harris, Walsall Council Coalition portfolio holder for leisure and culture, said: "We are now getting to a very exciting phase of the project where GPs are moving in."

"Pelsall Village Centre is a major project that is bringing together key services for the benefit of residents of all ages and follows much hard work and campaigning by the area's councillors."

"We are on schedule to have the whole project completed just after New Year and are looking forward to it making a real difference to our local communities and the wider area."

Community carol singing

A COMMUNITY carol singing event is taking place at Pelsall Community Centre, in Station Road, on Friday, December 21, at 7pm.

The event is free admission and there will be coffee, mince pies and other refreshments. The event is organised by Pelsall Evangelical Church

Pupils go Christmas crackers for fair



Pupils Katie Thornley, Olivia Adams, Olivia Rattenberry, Jake Foster and Daniel Phillips made their own crackers

YOUNGSTERS from St Michael's School in Pelsall made cakes, chocolates and biscuits – as well as crackers complete with toys, jokes and hats inside – that were sold at their Christmas fair on Friday, which raised more than £2,000.

Gemma Ivens, chairman of the Maple Road school's Parents, Teachers & Friends Association, said: "We are very proud of our school and the parents and children are always so supportive. We feel very blessed."

A knockout success as partnership revives game

A CLASSIC television competition revived as a family fundraising day on Pelsall Common has been declared a success after raising thousands for charity.

The It's a Knock Out-style competition organised by Brownhills, Pelsall, Shelfield and Rushall Area Partnership, managed to raise £1,800 with the help of sponsors Taylor Wimpey, Cameron Homes and Cory Environmental.

First

Several teams took part to complete the course, with the Oakley Crew taking first place, while spectators enjoyed refreshments provided by two village stores who supported the event.

Money raised at the event was handed over to St Giles Walsall Hospice and The Royal British Legion last month.

Santa to call at the clock

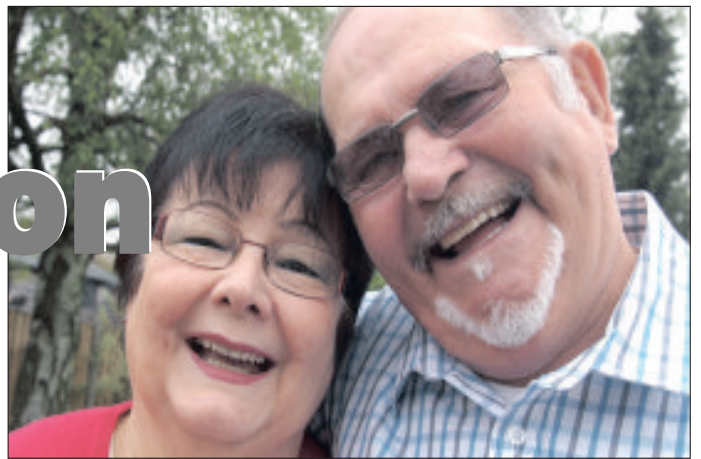
THE sound of sleigh bells will ring out as Santa makes his rounds this week in Pelsall in aid of Pelsall Carnival.

The carnival committee's annual Christmas sleigh fundraiser will take place on Friday and Saturday evening. On the Saturday Santa will meet children at the clock in the village from 4.30 to 6pm.

Advertisement

Clive's transformation

A working union between two dental professionals is helping to bring about life-changing outcomes. Retired sales director Clive, right, with wife Margaret, was terrified of dentists. Read why now he's recommending his friends book in to see them.



A Navy nightmare is finally overcome by the power of creative dentistry

Suction solution

A CUTTING-EDGE development to help resolve the stability problems faced by thousands of denture wearers is now available.

Denturist Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) says the invention has the potential to improve the life quality of those experiencing long-term problems with ill-fitting teeth. The Ultra Suction teeth are held in place by tiny valve-operated suction devices.

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Traditional options

THE work of the Denture Clinic has found satisfied customers from as far away as Spain. Its hand-crafted dentures, made in laboratories on the premises, are known for their natural look. Clinic principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS (Eng), says: "I remain passionate about resolving denture problems and for many, quality, traditional dentures can bring about hugely effective results."

CLIVE was so afraid of the dentist he plucked up all of his courage and begged him to extract all of his teeth so that he'd never have problems ever again.

That was more than 20 years ago, but what the retired sales director didn't know was that his tooth troubles were far from over.

Following the extractions dentures were fitted and he no problems for a few years. It was a welcome break from the pain he had experienced and the catalogue of dental disasters he had endured.

But the natural ageing process began to take its toll and Clive experienced stability problems with the lower denture as his gums receded. For five years he endured the embarrassment of dentures, sore spots on his gums and denying himself some of his favourite foods. "It took real determination to face up to the problem and the prospect of more dental work."

Clive recalls his first dental nightmare: Stationed at Malta while in the Royal Navy, he suddenly had raging toothache the night before he was due to play in a football match.

"I'd been drinking to dull the pain but as soon as I was back on board the duty dentists was summoned. He'd been drinking too and when he injected me with the anaesthetic he broke the needle."

"I eventually had to have an X-ray so he could find where the needle was. That was me finished. I'd do anything to avoid the dentist from there on."

In recent years Clive has had four den-

ture relines to help the stability issues, but none provided a long-term solution.

Flashing his new smile and laughing heartily, Clive adds: "Things were so bad that if I turned to the right my teeth would still be facing forward."

"I can't stress how big a deal it was for me to get things sorted. I was terrified, so when I saw a piece in the paper about Steven Burchell and suction denture technology, I agreed to see him."

Clive's gum erosion was too severe for the suction system to work effectively and he decided to have implant-retained dentures. He was referred by Mr Burchell Dip CDT RCS (Eng), whose Denture Clinic is based at the Parkdale Dental Clinic in Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, and North Street, Dudley, to implantologist Mr

Jonathon Pugh BDS MSc. Mr Pugh, principal of the Parkdale practice, carried out the surgery and the prosthetics were hand-crafted by Mr Burchell.

Clive recalls the procedure. "I was dreading it, but all I felt was a sensation that Mr Pugh was rubbing my gums." Clive's wife, Margaret, adds: "It's true! I was allowed to sit in with Clive. We were both treated excellently."

Since having the implant-retained dentures, Clive has been able to bite into crispy apples and indulge himself with pork crackling. "I feel comfortable and confident, it's the best money I've ever spent and have recommended both Steve and Jon to friends."

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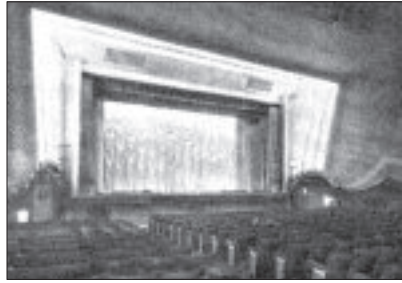


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MEMORY LANE



George Formby meets Walsall Mayor Dr E P Drabble



The magnificent proscenium stage at The Avion



Avion staff pictured sometime in the 1950s



The Avion's luxurious foyer circa 1938

Avion cinema book is last work of historian

A BOOK based upon the scrapbooks of a cinema manager was launched last week by friends of an Aldridge author, who dedicated the last years of his life to its research.

The Avion, by the late author and historian Harry Dennant, tells the stories behind the village's cinema. The grand picture palace was focal point of the community during its heyday during the golden age of Hollywood and also saw live performances from top entertainers, such as George Formby.

The book was largely derived from the scrapbooks of the general manager Harry Russell, who worked there for 20 years, as well as from firsthand accounts of patrons and former staff recorded by Mr Dennant since 2007.

The Avion Cinema De Luxe was built by businessman Albert Brain and opened in September 26, 1938, to bring a touch of Hollywood glamor to Aldridge.

by Tom Mason

As well as being a cinema showing American and British movies, The Avion also put on shows and in its later years, like so many cinemas, became a bingo hall.

It hosted George Formby for its grand opening before the war but the premises also saw many other stars after it introduced variety acts in 1950.

Comedian

These included comedian Larry Grayson, famous for hosting The Generation Game and his 'Shut That Door' catchphrase, pianist Semprini and Irish crooner Val Doonican with his group The Ramblers.

Aldridge jockey Johnny Bullock, winner of the 1951 Grand National on 40-1 outsider Nickel Coin, was guest of honour at The Avion to watch a newsreel of his famous victory.

In 1973 an Aldridge man, Harry Whitehouse, purchased the building and converted it into the popular

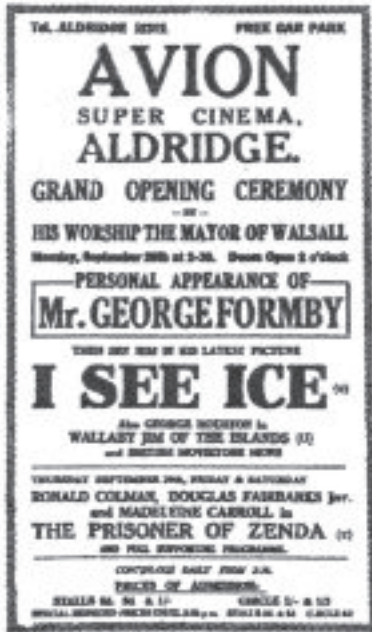
Legalite Bingo Hall, and it remained in his family until his death in 1993 at the age of 83. It was taken over by Jarglen and later Gala Bingo before being abandoned in 2009.

The building was partially demolished but its shell is to be turned into a J.D Wetherspoons pub under plans approved by Walsall Council.

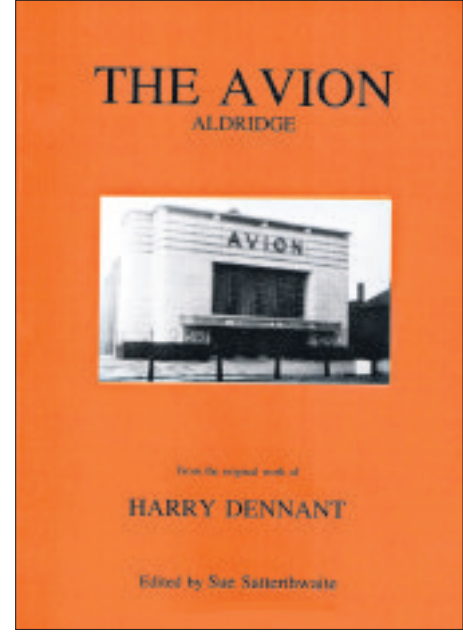
In her foreword, the book's editor Sue Satterthwaite said: "There could be no one better than Harry Dennant to write a book about The Avion. Harry loved the place but sadly he died before his work could be completed."

Proceeds from sales of the book, priced £5m will go to two local charities - Rosie's Helping Hands, a charity which Harry supported, and St Giles Walsall Hospice where the author spent the final days of his life.

The book is available from several local outlets. These include Aldridge Library, in Rookery Lane, Aldridge; Scrumptious Sweets and Treats, Anchor Parade, Aldridge; Lynda's Pets and Plants Walsall Wood Road, Aldridge; and Waterstones, in Park Street, Walsall.



An advert for the opening of the new cinema



Harry Dennant's book on the village's movie palace

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REVIEWS

Harmonious end to year of folk acclaim

June Tabor and The Oysterband, Birmingham Town Hall

IT has been a pretty amazing year for grand dame of folk June Tabor and The Oysterband, both weighed down with trophies from the 2012 Radio2 Folk Awards and their album Ragged Kingdom earning acclaim all over the place.

Oysterband were first on stage led by lead singer John Jones. They laid down the intro for June to quietly walk on stage before moving into Mississippi Summer accompanied by the fiddle and squeezebox.

They slipped into anti-war song Fountains Flowing from their award-winning album. It has the melody of the hymn To Be A Pilgrim. John and June's voices were lifted beautifully by the harmonies of the rest of the band.

The band then pulled out a cover version of the Velvet Underground's All Tomorrow's Parties. One of the highlights of the set was a capella (When I Was No But) Sweet Sixteen with the magnificent harmonies of the men blending sweetly with June's soft tones. DF

They came Saw and conquered

The Saw Doctors
Wulfrun Hall,
Wolverhampton

IT MAY be a quarter of a century since the Galway Gang hit the music scene but The Saw Doctors show no signs of slowing down – or taking things easy if the energy and enthusiasm they brought to Wolves is anything to go by.

The band including newest recruit Lindsey Cleary came onto a roaring welcome, opening with World of Good and from then on there was no let up.

Loud

They gave the crowd what they wanted and they lapped up numbers such as Tommy K, Will It Never Stop Raining and To Win Just Once.

They played loud and long and gave bigger and better versions of some of their old favourites as they took their fans on a musical journey through their career.

The Green and Red of



The Saw Doctors – Irish band celebrating 25 years

Mayo saw Leo Moran let loose on the guitar before the rest of the band got in on the act.

For most of the songs, such as in the wonderful Clare Island, all the Docs had to do was provide the opening bars and the fans would have happily taken over. With I'll Be On My Way, I Useta Love Her and Bless Me Father the

fans soaked up every note. In the encore the crowd went mental on hearing the opening notes of Joyce Country Ceili Band, which led on to the big finish of their unofficial anthem N17 and, finally, Hay Ride.

The fans would have kept going all week given the chance.

Danny Farragher

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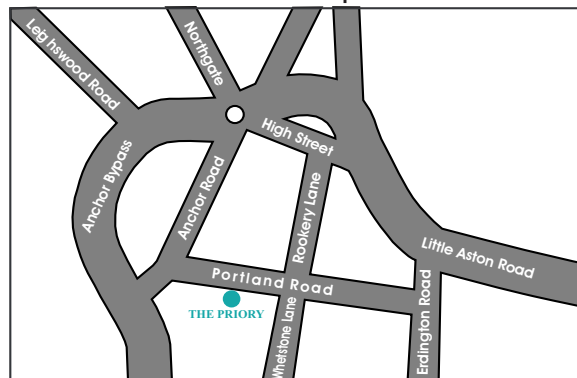
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What's On! Walsall

The Nutcracker live from London

SHOWCASE Walsall presents the perfect Christmas ballet with The Nutcracker, broadcast live via satellite from the stage at London's Royal Opera House in Covent Garden on tonight (Thursday) at 7.30pm.

Tchaikovsky's enchanting score, performed by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia orchestra, is the backdrop to a much-loved family favourite that features the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Waltz of the Flowers. Peter Wright's classic production about a magical Christmas Eve journey was first seen at Covent Garden in 1984.

For performance is being recorded for an encore showing at 1pm on Sunday, December 16.

Severn Trent's singers perform

FRESH from their winning appearance on TV, the Severn Trent Choir will be performing on tonight (Thursday) in the Elgar Concert Hall at Birmingham University. There will also be a lively performance from award-winning percussionist Simone Rebello.

Check ticket availability on 0121 345 0600.

Open mic night

OPEN mic night is held at Bookmark Bloxwich in Elmore Row tomorrow (Friday) from 7.30pm. Call 01922 655900.

An afternoon variety concert due at Darlaston Town Hall today (Thursday) has been cancelled.

The pantomime season is here again... oh yes it is!

THE FESTIVE season is almost upon us and that means pantomime time and a feast of family entertainment at the region's theatres.



Brian Conley and Lesley Joseph star in the Birmingham Hippodrome panto

The second city's big panto is Robinson Crusoe and the Caribbean Pirates (December 15-January 29) with jungle escapee Brian Conley making his sixth panto appearance at the Hippodrome, this time with Birds of a Feather star Lesley Joseph.

Beanstalk

The Grand in Wolverhampton reunites Coronation Street pair Sherrie Hewson and Ken Morley in Jack and the Beanstalk (until January 20), plus Keith Harris with Orville the Duck and Cuddles.

Potteries' favourite Jonathan Wilkes is Buttons in Cinderella at The Regent in Stoke (Dec 13-Jan 4).

Other children's shows include Birmingham Rep's Wind in the Willows (until Jan 19) at the Crescent Theatre and James and the Giant Peach (until February 2) at the Old Rep, both Birmingham.

The Royal Shakespeare Company present The Mouse and His Child in Stratford until January 12.

Strictly stars for NIA next month



West End star Denise Van Outen

WITH just a couple of weeks until the Strictly Come Dancing grand final on TV, the celebrities appearing at the NIA in Birmingham as part of the live show have been announced.

West End star Denise Van Outen and former England cricketer Phil Tufnell



GB Olympic gymnast Louis Smith

are the final celebrities added to the tour calling at Birmingham for the weekend of January 18-20.

Judges

They join Tracey Beaker star Dani Harmer, TV presenter Fern Britton,



Popular actress Lisa Riley

actress Lisa Riley, Olympian Louis Smith and former England cricket captain Michael Vaughan. Kate Thornton hosts and the judges will be Craig Revel Horwood, Len Goodman and Bruno Tonioli.

Tickets from £35 to £65 plus fees.

Male voice choir festive concerts

SHELFIELD Male Voice Choir will be performing two Christmas concerts.

The performances will be held at Sheffield Methodist Church, in Lichfield Road, on Monday, December 17, and Wednesday, December 19, at 7.30pm.

Tickets cost £6 each and can be bought by calling (01922) 682070.

The concerts will be the choir's first fundraising events in support of their new 2013 charity, which will be Walsall Breast Cancer Self Help Group.

A cheque for £2,000 will be presented to Prostate Cancer Support on December 19. It was the choir's chosen charity for this year.

Chance to join city Piaf tribute

THE Matthew Jones Orchestra is seeking amateur singers to take part in a tribute concert to French legend Edith Piaf at Birmingham Town Hall on February 10. It will be narrated by EastEnders actress June Brown.

Rehearsals start in January. Call Jenny Sloan on 0121 632 2330 or 07941 918 688.

McFly Civic gig

POP group McFly have announced a gig at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on May 11. The band have had seven UK no.1 hits and feature Strictly Come Dancing winner Harry Judd and 'King of the Jungle' Dougie Foynter.

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What's On!

SATURDAY'S TV 15.12.12

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE



Sarah Harding

10 Years of Girls Aloud
ITV1, 9pm

Winning a TV talent show is no guarantee of a lasting career – just ask One True Voice, the boy band formed on the show Popstars: The Rivals in 2002. So, we can't begrudge their fellow winners, Girls Aloud, celebrating their 10th anniversary with a new single and a reunion. This documentary looks back at how Nadine Coyle, Sarah Harding, Nicola Roberts, Kimberley Walsh and Cheryl Cole were brought together in the first place, and looks at why they became one of Britain's biggest girl groups. We also follow the girls as they prepare for their comeback.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Baking Made Easy. (R) **12.00** BBC News. Regional News: Weather. **12.15** Football Focus. **1.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.30** Gymnastics: World Cup. **4.00** Final Score. **5.25** BBC News: Regional News: Weather. **5.45** A Question of Sport: Sports Personality 2012 Special.

6.30 **Strictly Come Dancing.** Bruce Forsyth and Tess Daly host the semi-final, in which the five remaining couples battle it out on the ballroom floor for a coveted place in next week's final.

8.15 **Merlin.** Morged is torn between loyalty and love, unaware his choice will shape Camelot's destiny – and as the drums of war beat louder, Merlin feels trapped by the cruel circle of fate.

9.00 **The National Lottery Saturday Night Draws.** OJ Borg presents as the balls are set rolling to decide the all-important numbers. Including the Lotto and Thunderball draws and Lotto Plus 5 results.

9.15 **Casualty.** Tensions rise once again between Tom and Dominic as they argue over the treatment of a baby with severe hypothermia, while Dylan finally admits he has not moved on from Sam.

10.05 **BBC News.** Weather.

10.25 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of today's Premier League clashes, including Newcastle United v Manchester City and Manchester United v Sunderland; National Lottery Update.

11.45 **The Football League Show.** **1.00** Weatherview. **1.05** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 CBeebies. **12.00** Animal Park. (R) **1.00** Coast. (R) **1.20** Film: Holiday Affair. (1949) **2.45** Film: The War Lover. (1962) **4.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **5.30** Flog It! (R)

6.30 **The Hairy Bikers: Mums Know Best at Christmas.** Si King and Dave Myers find out what women are cooking for their families over the festive period, including roast goose and salted cured lamb steamed over birch twigs. (R)

7.30 **Don't Panic! The Dad's Army Story.** Victoria Wood pays tribute to the timeless humour of Dad's Army, introducing classic moments from the long-running series. Contributors include Ian Lavender and Clive Dunn. (R)

8.20 **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring's men face the might of a rival platoon in a battle to prove their worth. Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier play the superannuated soldiers. (R)

9.20 **Clive Dunn: A Tribute.** Family, colleagues and friends pay tribute to much-loved actor Clive Dunn, who died in November and was best known for his role as Lance-Corporal Jones in classic sitcom Dad's Army.

10.00 **Jools Holland: My Life in Music.** The musician and Later host talks about his life and career, with contributions by Tom Jones, Hugh Laurie, Stephen Fry, Paul Weller, Bob Geldof and Vic Reeves.

11.00 **Later with Jools Holland and Friends.** A compilation of Jools' performances with his guests.

12.00 Film: Savage Grace. (2007) **1.30** Film: Priceless. (2006) **3.10** Close.

ITV1

6.00 CITV: Babar and the Adventures of Badou. **6.10** Babar and the Adventures of Badou. (R) **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.45** The Hive. (R) **6.50** Animals. (R) **7.00** Animals. (R) **7.05** Flabag Monkeyface. (R) **7.25** Flabag Monkeyface. (R) **7.25** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.40** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.05** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.30** Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **11.15** Murder. She Wrote. (R) **12.20** ITV News: Weather. **12.30** Holiday Home Sweet Home. **2.30** Midsomer Murders. (R) **4.25** All Star Family Fortunes. (R) **5.15** Regional Programme: Weather. **5.45** Film: Back to the Future Part II. (1989)

7.40 **Take Me Out Celebrity Christmas Special.** Keith Lemon, Joe Swash and Matt Johnson try to impress a line-up of 30 single women from series past and present and win a date to the Isle of Fernandos. Last in the series.

9.00 **10 Years of Girls Aloud.** The story of the girl group, from their formation on Popstars: The Rivals in 2002 to the release of their greatest hits album this year, featuring interviews with all five members.

10.20 **ITV News: Weather.** **10.35** **Michael Buble: Home for Christmas.** (R) **11.50** **Film: Captivity.** (2007) Horror. With Elisha Cuthbert.

1.15 **The Store.** ITV News Headlines. **3.00** In Plain Sight. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen. **5.30** ITV Morning News.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Grid. (R) **7.00** Teenage Superhumans. **7.55** The Morning Line. **8.55** T4: Rockcorps 2012. **9.10** T4: The Hobbit: T4 Movie Special. **9.45** T4: Will & Grace. (R) **10.15** T4: Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.45** T4: Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **11.15** T4: Frasier. (R) **11.40** T4: Frasier. (R) **12.10** T4: The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.40** T4: The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.10** T4: The Simpsons. (R) **1.45** Channel 4 Racing. **3.55** The Simpsons. (R) **4.25** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **4.55** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **5.25** Come Dine with Me: Ireland.

6.00 **Come Dine with Me: Ireland.** Yoga teacher Dervil Fleming hosts the fourth dinner party from Co Kerry.

6.30 **Come Dine with Me: Ireland.** Music teacher Sean Treacy hosts the final dinner party.

6.55 **Channel 4 News.** **7.25** **Thoughtful.** Religious beliefs and the law.

7.30 **Heston's Fantastic Food.** Heston Blumenthal makes super-sized versions of lunchbox favourites. (R)

8.30 **Stephen Fry: Gadget Man.** The actor delves into the world of technology. (R)

9.00 **Film: The Twilight Saga: Eclipse.** (2010) Premiere. Bella Swan's supernatural love triangle threatens to ignite a conflict between vampires and werewolves. Romantic fantasy sequel, with Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson.

11.30 **Film: Remember Me.** (2010) Premiere. Romantic drama, starring Robert Pattinson.

1.30 **Film: The Escapist.** (2008) **3.10** Hollyoaks. **5.20** Countdown.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. **10.35** ThunderCats. **11.10** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) **11.20** Highland Emergency. (R) **11.55** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.55** Chris Tarrant: Extreme Railways. (R) **1.55** Film: A Grandpa for Christmas. (2007) Family comedy, starring Ernest Borgnine. **3.35** Film: Meet the Santas. (2005) Fantasy comedy sequel, with Steve Guttenberg.

5.20 **5 News Weekend.** **5.25** **Film: Mrs Miracle.** (2009) A talented housekeeper helps a widowed father of twin boys to turn his life around and rediscover his love of music. Family drama, starring Doris Roberts and James Van Der Beek.

7.20 **Film: An Old Fashioned Christmas.** (2010) Premiere. A wealthy woman visits an Irish earl in the hope than he can help her grand-daughter's literary career. Period drama sequel, with Jacqueline Bisset and Catherine Steadman.

9.00 **Greatest Christmas TV Moments.** Countdown of 50 festive TV highlights, featuring Gavin & Stacey, Morecambe and Wise, Only Fools and Horses, Wallace and Gromit, Doctor Who, Top of the Pops and The Royle Family. (R)

11.55 **Inside Hollywood.** Magazine show, with location reports, news and views from behind the scenes.

12.00 **SuperCasino.** Live interactive gaming. **4.00** Michaela's Wild Challenge. Michaela Strachan gets groomed by monkeys. (R) **4.25** Great Artists. (R) **4.50** Rough Guide to Beaches. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.15** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.40** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** Doctor Who **8.05** Top Gear **9.15** Russell Howard's Good News Extra **10.00** Film: Kill Bill: Vol 1 (2003) **11.45** Family Guy

BBC Four **7.00** Around the World in 60 Minutes **8.00** David Attenborough's First Life **9.00** The Killing III **11.00** Elvis in Las Vegas

ITV2 **3.50** The Xtra Factor: Girls Best & Worst Ever **4.50** The Xtra Factor: Boys Best & Worst Ever **5.50** The Xtra Factor: Groups Best & Worst Ever **6.50** The Xtra Factor: Overs Best & Worst Ever **7.55** The Xtra Factor: Judges Best & Worst Ever **9.00** Take Me Out: The Gossip **9.45** Film: Sleepy Hollow (1999) **11.55** A Celebrity Juice Carol – Chapter 1

ITV3 **5.55** Murder, She Wrote **7.00** Christmas Lights **8.30** Fast Freddie, the Widow and Me **10.00** Bomb Girls **11.00** Film: Sleepers (1996)

ITV4 **3.55** Film: Follow a Star (1959) Christmas Lights **8.30** Fast Freddie, the Widow and Me **10.00** Bomb Girls **11.00** Film: Sleepers (1996)

ITV5 **5.55** Murder, She Wrote **7.00** Christmas Lights **8.30** Fast Freddie, the Widow and Me **10.00** Bomb Girls **11.00** Film: Sleepers (1996)

ITV6 **3.55** Film: Follow a Star (1959) Christmas Lights **8.30** Fast Freddie, the Widow and Me **10.00** Bomb Girls **11.00** Film: Sleepers (1996)

ITV7 **3.55** Film: Follow a Star (1959) Christmas Lights **8.30** Fast Freddie, the Widow and Me **10.00** Bomb Girls **11.00** Film: Sleepers (1996)

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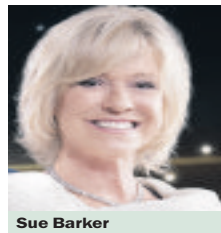
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SUNDAY'S TV 16.12.12

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE



Sue Barker

Sports Personality of the Year 2012
BBC1, 7.30pm
 The big question in 2012 isn't who will win the BBC Sports Personality of the Year award, but who won't. It's been such an extraordinary period for British sport that there are some massive names who won't even make it to the shortlist. After becoming the first Brit to win a Grand Slam event for decades, not to mention his Olympic medals in the men's singles and mixed doubles, you might expect Andy Murray to be a shoe-in. But he'll face stiff opposition from current favourite, cyclist Bradley Wiggins and Mo Farah.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast, 7.40 Match of the Day, (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show, 10.00 Fern Britton Meets Daniel O'Donnell, 11.00 Sunday Politics: Weather for the Week Ahead, 12.25 Countryfile, (R) 1.20 Bargain Hunt, (R) 2.05 Regional Programme, 3.05 Call the Midwife, (R) 4.05 Lifeline, 4.15 Songs of Praise, 4.55 Nigel Slater's 12 Tastes of Christmas, (R) 5.25 BBC News, Regional News, Weather, 5.50 Countryfile, 6.50 **Strictly Come Dancing: The Results**, Tess Daly and Claudia Winkelman announce which two couples will be hanging up their dancing shoes, determining the line-up for next week's final. Katherine Jenkins also performs.
7.30 Sports Personality of the Year 2012, Sue Barker, Gary Lineker and Clare Balding present this year's ceremony live from the ExCel in London, where the successor to Mark Cavendish will be crowned from a shortlist of 12.
10.05 BBC News: Regional News, Weather.
10.30 Match of the Day 2, Colin Murray reviews the day's Premier League action, featuring Tottenham Hotspur v Swansea City at White Hart Lane and West Bromwich Albion v West Ham United at the Hawthorns.
11.30 The Graham Norton Show, With Martin Freeman, Dawn French, Emma Thompson, Lee Mack and Girls Aloud, (R)
12.15 Film: Three Fugitives, (1989) 1.50 Weatherview, 1.55 Sign Zone: Film 2012, (R) 2.25 Holby City, (R) 3.25 Great British Food Revival, (R) 4.25 BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 CBeebies, 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites, 11.30 Nigella's Christmas Kitchen, (R) 12.00 Film: Follow the Fleet, (1936) 1.50 Film: Shall We Dance? (1937) 3.35 Animal Park, (R) 4.05 Coast, (R) 5.00 Flog It! (R)
6.00 Cuba with Simon Reeve, The broadcaster heads to the Caribbean to look at the effects of the past two years of economic liberalisation, exploring the impact it has had on Cubans and their society, (R)
7.00 The Great Spanish Crash, Paul Mason travels to Spain to investigate how its once-thriving economy has become the latest casualty of the Eurozone crisis and left the country in need of a bailout.
8.00 Fawcett Towers, Basil decides to enhance the hotel's reputation with an exclusive night of gourmet cuisine. Unfortunately, his new chef is distracted by hapless waiter Manuel, (R)
8.30 Film: Calendar Girls, (2003) Members of a Yorkshire branch of the Women's Institute cause controversy when they pose nude for a charity calendar. Fact-based comedy, starring Helen Mirren and Julie Walters.
10.15 Qi XL, Extended edition.
11.00 Never Mind the Buzzcocks, Liza Tarbuck hosts, with guests Rita Ora, Labrinth, Jameela Jamil and Jason Manford, (R)
11.30 Film: Surviving Christmas, (2004) Family comedy, starring Ben Affleck.
12.55 Film: Body Heat, (1981) 2.45 BBC News, 4.25 The Super League Show, 5.25 Close.

ITV1

6.00 CITV: Engie Benji, 6.10 Babar and the Adventures of Badou, (R) 6.25 Babar and the Adventures of Badou, (R) 6.35 Signed Stories, (R) 6.45 Monk, (R) 6.50 Canimals, (R) 7.00 Canimals, (R) 7.05 Fleabag Monkeyface, (R) 7.15 Fleabag Monkeyface, (R) 7.30 Almost Naked Animals, (R) 7.40 Almost Naked Animals, (R) 7.50 Big Time Rush, 8.30 Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge, 9.25 ITV News, 9.30 There's No Taste Like Home, (R) 10.30 Dinner Date, (R) 11.30 Dickinson's Real Deal, (R) 12.30 ITV News: Weather, 12.35 Film: Carry On Don't Lose Your Head, (1966) 2.20 The X Factor Results, (R) 4.20 Regional Programme, Weather, 4.40 ITV News: Weather, 4.50 Film: E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial, (1982)
7.00 Happy Birthday E.T., Celebrating the 30th anniversary of E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial, this documentary explores the making of Steven Spielberg's classic film, with contributions by some of the cast.
8.00 The Making of a Lady, A penniless woman marries a lord for money, rather than love, but her new life of wealth brings envy and danger. Period drama, starring Lydia Wilson.
9.45 ITV News: Weather.
10.00 Film: I Am Legend, (2007) Sci-fi thriller, starring Will Smith.
11.50 Pensioners Behind Bars, The growing number of over-60s doing time for a criminal offence, (R)
12.40 The Store: ITV News Headlines, 2.40 Motorsport UK, 3.30 ITV Nightscreen, 5.30 ITV Morning News.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Sali Mali, (R) 6.10 The Hoobs, (R) 6.35 The Hoobs, (R) 7.00 The Grid, 7.30 Survival of the Fittest, 8.00 Will & Grace, (R) 8.25 Frasier, (R) 8.55 Frasier, (R) 9.30 Sunday Brunch, 11.50 The Big Bang Theory, (R) 12.20 The Big Bang Theory, (R) 12.45 The Simpsons, (R) 1.15 The Simpsons, (R) 1.45 Deal or No Deal, 2.45 Film: Hocus Pocus, (1993) 4.40 Film: Deck the Halls, (2006)
6.20 Channel 4 News, 6.50 **The Political Slot**, Education minister Elizabeth Truss MP talks about free schools.
6.55 4thought.tv, Members of the public reflect on religious issues.
7.00 Come Dine with Me Christmas Special, Christmas hitmakers Maize Williams of Boney M and Joss Lewie are joined by soul singer VV Brown and DJ Toby Anstis for a week of festive dinner parties.
8.00 River Cottage: Three Go Mad at Christmas, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall is joined by Stephen Mangan, Mark Heap and Kathy Burke for a festive cookery extravaganza on the River Cottage farm.
9.00 Homeland, Carrie begins to suspect there is a mole in the CIA.
10.00 Peep Show, Jeremy moves in with Super Hans.
10.35 Film: I Love You Phillip Morris, (2009) Premiere. Romantic comedy drama, with Jim Carrey and Ewan McGregor.
12.25 5 Out of 10 Cats: Best Bits, 12.55 American Football Live, 4.45 Grudge Match, (R) 4.55 Deal or No Deal, (R) 5.50 Quick Bakes with Eric Lanlard, (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig, 6.05 Roary the Racing Car, (R) 6.15 Fifi and the Flowerbuds, (R) 6.25 Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures, (R) 6.30 The Mr Men Show, (R) 6.45 Olive the Ostrich, 6.50 Abby's Flying Fairy School, (R) 7.00 Roobarb and Custard Too, (R) 7.10 Bananas in Pyjamas, (R) 7.25 Animal Antics, (R) 7.30 Make Way for Noddy, (R) 7.40 City of Friends, (R) 7.50 Little Princess, (R) 8.05 The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky, (R) 8.25 Angelina Ballerina, 8.40 Rupert Bear, (R) 8.55 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom, (R) 9.10 Tolly's Travelling Circus, (R) 9.25 Roary the Racing Car, (R) 9.40 Jelly Jam, (R) 10.00 Power Rangers: Super Samurai, 10.35 ThunderCats, 11.10 Chinese Food in Minutes, (R) 11.15 Highland Emergency, (R) 11.45 Film: Mr St Nick, (2002) 1.30 Film: Battle of the Bulbs, (2010) 3.15 Film: All I Want for Christmas, (2007) 5.00 Film: The Da Vinci Code, (2006)
7.55 5 News Weekend, 8.00 **Film: Click**, (2006) A man gets his hands on a remote control that allows him to fast-forward through the dull parts of his life. Comedy, starring Adam Sandler.
10.00 Film: Zack and Miri Make a Porno, (2008) Premiere. Two friends plan to shoot a porn film, but find having sex for the cameras makes them rethink their feelings for each other. Comedy, with Seth Rogen and Elizabeth Banks.
11.55 World's Craziest Police Pursuits 2, (R)
12.55 SuperCasino, 4.00 House Doctor, (R) 4.50 Rough Guide to Cities, (R) 5.05 Hana's Helpline, (R) 5.15 The Milkshake! Show, (R) 5.40 Thomas & Friends, (R) 5.50 Roary the Racing Car, (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Merlin 7.50 Film: The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005) 10.00 Him & Her 10.30 Family Guy 11.15 American Dad!
BBC Four
3.35 The Roasts of Christmas Past 8.00 A Very English Winter: The Unthanks 9.00 Chas & Dave: Last Orders 10.00 Storyville: The Other Irish Travellers 11.00 Film: The Hunter (2010)
ITV2
3.35 Take Me Out Celebrity Christmas Special 4.50 Take Me Out: The Gossip Celebrity Christmas Special 5.35 Film: The Mummy Returns (2001) 8.00 Xtra Factor: Winner's Story 2012 9.00 Film: Gladiator (2000)
ITV3
3.40 Agatha Christie's Poirot 5.55 Lewis 7.55 Film: Houselitter (1991) 10.00 A Is for Acid: The story of killer John George Haigh, starring Martin Clunes.
ITV4
2.05 Film: Support Your Local Gunfighter (1971) 4.00 Film: Weekend at Bernie's (1989) 6.00 Film: Without a Clue (1988) 8.15 Film: Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) 10.00 Film: Enter the Dragon (1973)
E4
3.40 The Big Bang Theory 8.00 Film: Just My Luck (2006) 10.00 Misfits 11.00 The Inbetweeners
Film4
2.45 The Belles of St Trinian's (1954) 4.35 The Remains of the Day (1993) 7.15 Jumper (2008) A man with the ability to teleport is hunted by a secret religious society determined to wipe out all of his kind. Fantasy thriller, with Hayden Christensen, 9.00 Die Hard (1988) 11.40 Slither (2006)

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY

I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry, ITV1, 10.35pm
A fireman asks a male colleague to pretend to marry him to get round a hitch with his late wife's life insurance policy. Their plan is thrown off course when an overzealous city official begins to doubt the pair's relationship is genuine, and decides to conduct an investigation. Comedy, starring Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Steve Buscemi, Jessica Biel, Dan Aykroyd, Ving Rhames, Nicholas Turturro and Richard Chamberlain. (2007)

TUESDAY

The Unbearable Lightness of Being, BBC1, 11.35pm
A successful surgeon leads a carefree life in 1960s Czechoslovakia, and pursues complicated romances with two women – a Bohemian artist and a bookish small-town woman. Their lives are thrown into chaos when the country faces invasion by Society forces. Drama based on Milan Kundera's novel, starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Juliette Binoche, Lena Olin, Derek de Lint, Erland Josephson, Pavel Landovsky, Stellan Skarsgard, Pascale Kalensky. (1988)

WEDNESDAY

The Santa Suit, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A greedy executive hires men dressed as Santa Claus to sell his company's merchandise, but the real Father Christmas takes exception to being exploited and casts a spell that turns the businessman into one of the impersonators. As he plays the part of Santa, he acquires some much-needed festive spirit. Comedy, starring Kevin Sorbo and Jodie Dowdall. (2010)



Last Chance Harvey, Thursday, BBC2, 9pm

THURSDAY

Last Chance Harvey, BBC2, 9pm

A miserable New Yorker travels to London for his estranged daughter's wedding, but is devastated to find his ex-wife's new husband is to give the bride away instead of him. While trying to return home, he bumps into a woman feeling equally unfulfilled in her life, and their fledgling romance inspires them both to face up to their problems. Romantic drama, with Dustin Hoffman, Emma Thompson, Eileen Atkins, Kathy Baker, Liane Balaban, James Brolin, Richard Schiff, Wendy Mae Brown. (2008)

FRIDAY

Mistletoe Over Manhattan, Channel 5, 3.10pm

Santa Claus' wife goes to New York to perform a Christmas miracle and give her husband fresh inspiration. She befriends a cop who is in the midst of a divorce and offers to become a nanny to his children. She then discovers he still loves his wife, and tries to find a way to bring them back together. Christmas fantasy, starring Tricia Helfer and Greg Bryk. (2011)

Pick of the Week

Our sporting heroes get their just rewards

Whenever the show is broadcast, fans know that Christmas is just around the corner – but who will be celebrating the festive season with a shiny new trophy on the mantelpiece as well as a turkey in the oven?

The big question this year, of course, isn't who will win the main prize, but who won't.

It's been such an extraordinary period for British sport that there will be some massive names who won't even make it to the shortlist when, in other years, they might have been expected to walk away with the trophy.

For a start, Olympic gold medalists Charlotte Dujardin, Greg Rutherford, Victoria Pendleton, Laura Trott and Alistair Brownlee, and Europe's Ryder Cup hero Ian Poulter, have not made the final 12.

After becoming the first Brit to win a Grand Slam event for decades, not to mention his Olympic medals in the men's singles and mixed doubles, you might expect Andy Murray to be a shoe-in.

But then there's Bradley Wiggins to consider. He's not only our first-ever

winner of the Tour de France, he also won gold at the Games and is the current favourite to triumph again here.

Athletes Mo Farah and Jessica Ennis are also in the running (no pun intended), while Ben Ainslie's achievement in becoming the Olympics' most decorated sailor is recognised.

Also making the shortlist are rower Katharine Grainger, boxer Nicola Adams, Wiggins' cycling team mate Chris Hoy, golfer Rory McIlroy and Paralympians David Weir, Ellie Simmonds and Sarah Storey.

At least last year's accusations of sexism, which came after no women made the shortlist, can't be levelled at the Beeb this time.

Not only are there lots of females in the running for the main prize, how the nominees are decided has been changed too.

This time, a panel comprised of various BBC executives and presenters, newspaper sports editors, former nominees (this year's are Steve Redgrave, Tanni Grey-Thompson and Denise Lewis) and Sue Campbell, chair of UK Sport, has

been put together to come up with 12 worthy names.

The panel will also choose the 1st, 2nd and 3rd places for the Team of the Year, Overseas Personality of the Year and Coach of the Year awards. Other awards on the night will again be Young Sports Personality of the Year and Unsung Hero, which will continue to be decided by the existing specialist panel system and the Lifetime Achievement and Helen Rollason Awards, which will be decided by the Board of BBC Sport.

Barbara Slater, director BBC sport, says: "This year's sports personality of the year will be a celebration of what has been a truly unique year for sport in the UK. We are incredibly proud to be hosting the sporting grand finale for such a remarkable year."

Sue Barker, Gary Lineker and Clare Balding (whose own star rose thanks to her outstanding presenting skills during the BBC's coverage of the Olympics and Channel 4's hosting of the Paralympics) are the hosts.

And no matter what happens, next year's event is going to have a lot to live up to.



Sports Personality of the Year 2012, Sunday, BBC1, 7.30pm

Best of the Rest

Monday

Britain's Secret Terror Squad: Panorama, BBC1, 9pm

It seems that these days, there's nary a day goes by without some thrilling drama or other focusing on the cloak-and-dagger lives of people within the shady world of counter-terrorism. But just how grounded in reality are they? The answer is, generally, not very – yet 40 years ago, a unit existed which is far stranger than fiction, and ten times as shocking. For two years in the early 1970s, the British Army ran an undercover squad that operated outside the law, with orders to shoot terrorists on sight. They believe it saved lives, but in this documentary, reporter John Ware uncovers evidence that the unit may also have killed innocent civilians.

Bad Santas

Channel 4, 9pm

If you thought that all it took to be a Santa was a red suit and a beard, this two-part documentary should make you think again. It follows a group of unemployed men in their fifties, who are looking to make a fresh start by enrolling in one of the UK's most successful Santa schools (yes, apparently there is more than one). Under the watchful eye of James Lovell, Managing Director of the intriguingly named Ministry of Fun, the men will have to pass a series of challenges, but how many of the Santa students will graduate to a grotto of their own?

Tuesday

Inside Guinness World Records, ITV1, 8pm

It's 40 years since the much-missed Roy Castle

first presented Record Breakers, the BBC TV kids' show which captured the imaginations of millions. Whether it was the sight of him and a few dozen extras tap-dancing around the courtyard to BBC TV centre while Norris McWhirter looked on, or his reports on world records, for two decades Roy piqued the interest of many, and also helped boost sales of The Guinness Book of Records. Now the conclusion of this documentary provides a close access perspective on what drives the extraordinary and colourful characters that hold World Records. They include Wilma Conner, the oldest competitive female bodybuilder, and Tom Lackey, the oldest aerobatic wing walker.

Wednesday

The Christmas No 1 Story, BBC2, 9pm

In Britain, predicting what will be at the top of the charts on December 25 has become a festive tradition up there with trimming the tree, singing carols and moaning about how early the supermarkets start hawking their seasonal wares. But just why has that number one slot become so important, and what do the chart-toppers of Christmas past tell us about the tastes of the Great British record-buying public? That's what this documentary aims to find out, as it traces the story of the Christmas number one, from Harry Belafonte, to last year's single by the Military Wives, taking in everyone from the Beatles to Benny Hill along the way.

The Twins Who Share a Body

Channel 4, 10pm

Indian twins Sohna and Mohna are two of the world's most incredible children – but their story isn't an easy one to hear. They're celebrating their ninth birthday; however that in itself is an amazing achievement, as the siblings share just one body. Their condition (known as dicephalic parapagus conjoined twins) affects only one in a million, and so this documentary questions just how they manage to live a fulfilled life when they are two conscious beings in one body. Meanwhile, doctors desperately try to find out whether the twins will always be just one body, or if it would be possible for them to be separated and one life sacrificed.

Thursday

Young Apprentice, BBC1, 8pm

It's been eight weeks since the latest batch of budding business brains first set foot in Alan Sugar's legendary boardroom, and every challenge they have undertaken has been building up to this point. The hopefuls have been dropping like flies, and after last week's double-firing, which followed a festival-based task in which the two teams of three were challenged to flog products at

open-air world music event Womad, there are now just four of the original 12 contestants remaining. Let's hope they have their CVs in order, because there's everything – including a £25,000 investment in their business – to play for in this final episode.

Friday

Text Santa, ITV1, 8pm

The BBC is proud of Children in Need, but ITV isn't shoddy in the telethon stakes either. Okay, so the broadcaster hasn't had one that's run for as long as the BBC has, but in Text Santa, it's found a format that could match it. Last year it made its debut, raising more than £4million for six charities. This year, it's hoped that total will be surpassed, with Age UK, Anthony Nolan, Carers UK, Marie Curie Cancer Care, Together for Short Lives and Whizz-Kidz all set to benefit. Ant & Dec, Phillip Schofield, Holly Willoughby, Christine Bleakley and Paddy McGuinness will all be on hand to introduce star acts and sketches featuring famous faces and TV shows.

QI

BBC2, 10pm

One of Danny Baker's greatest strengths, aside from being a fine DJ, is his ability to pep up panel games such as Shooting Stars, Have I Got News For You, and this show. Being a font of all knowledge, the 55-year-old Londoner could even give Stephen Fry a run for his money in the trivia stakes, but how will he fare in this festive edition of the engaging quiz? Now there's a chance to find out as he joins Sarah Millican, Phill Jupitus and regular panellist Alan Davies.



Text Santa, Friday, ITV1, 8pm

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Large conservatory is a key feature of house



A view from the rear of the property in Bentons Lane showing the spacious conservatory

A NEW-BUILD detached property in Great Wyrley, with no upward chain, is for sale based on offers of £249,950.

The estate agents say the house at Bentons Lane has been finished to a very high standard and must be viewed to be appreciated, with accommodation briefly comprising lounge, study, kitchen/diner, conservatory and four double bedrooms with en suite to the master bedroom.

The house is approached via a block paved driveway with landscaped garden to the side, while inside on the ground floor the lounge is 20ft 9in by 10ft 3in and has double doors into a dining area.

Granite

There is also a study, 8ft 5in by 6ft 6in, while the kitchen diner – 21ft 10in by 12ft 1in – has a range of wall and base units with sparkle granite work surfaces, soft close drawers, display units, breakfast island unit with one-and-a-half inset sink unit with pull out mixer tap, integrated washer/dryer, dishwasher and a range-style gas cooker with extractor hood over plus space for a fridge freezer. French doors lead to a conservatory, 21ft 10in by 12ft 1in.

On the first floor the master bedroom has an en-suite and there are three further bedrooms and a bathroom.

Call estate agent Goodchilds on (01922) 711444 for more details.



Priced at £249,950, this detached is available in Bentons Lane, Great Wyrley



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Corner plot for detached home



This detached is in Lochalsh Grove, Willenhall

A DETACHED house on a corner plot in a quiet cul-de-sac position in Willenhall is for sale priced at £215,000.

The property is in Lochalsh Grove on the Coppice Farm Estate.

It comes with accommodation briefly comprising of reception hall, lounge, separate dining room, breakfast kitchen, laundry, guest cloakroom, four bedrooms, re-fitted en-suite shower room and bathroom.

It also benefits from gas central heating, double glazing, front garden with block paved driveway, integral garage and rear garden.

On the ground floor the lounge, 15ft 9in by 13ft 2in, has a wooden surround fireplace, marble hearth and inset, coal effect gas fire and double doors to the dining room, which is 10ft 10in by 8ft 8in and has French doors to the rear garden.

Inset

The spacious breakfast kitchen, 10ft 9in by 11ft, has a range of fitted base and wall cupboards offering lots of storage space, work surfaces, inset stainless steel sink, display cabinets and gas cooker point.

The laundry room has an inset sink and plumbing for automatic washing

A spacious breakfast kitchen has ample storage

machine and the cloakroom a WC and wash hand basin.

On the first floor, bedroom one has an en suite with shower cubicle, WC and wash basin.

There are three further bedrooms and a family bathroom with panelled bath with mixer shower, WC and wash hand basin.

Outside is an extensive lawned front garden with borders and block paved driveway providing of road parking and access to a garage, with side access to the rear garden with patio area, lawn and borders.

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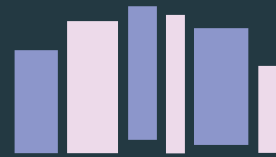
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- Master en-suite
- Downstairs WC

£650 pcm

Chapel Street, Blakenhall

- A 4 bed semi detached property
- 1 spacious reception room
- Fitted kitchen/diner with cooker
- Upstairs family bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Guest WC, Driveway and DSS accepted

£600 pcm

Tasker Street, Walsall

- A 5 double bedroom terraced property
- Consists of 2 large reception rooms
- Fitted kitchen with units
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating and double glazing
- DSS accepted and a large rear garden

£500 pcm

Addenbrooke Street,

- A spacious 3 bed end terrace property
- Spacious front and rear reception rooms
- Large modern fitted kitchen
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- DSS accepted and Refurbished

£500 pcm

Ryle street, Walsall

- 3 Bed semi detached property
- 1 Spacious reception room
- Good size fitted kitchen
- Spacious family bathroom
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Conservatory and DSS accepted

£495 pcm

Beacon Street, Chuckery

- A 3 bed end terrace property
- 2 reception rooms
- Fitted kitchen
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

£495 pcm

Pleck Road, Pleck

- A re-furnished 3 bed mid terrace
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs bathroom with shower
- Gas Central heating and Double Glazing
- Rear garden DSS accepted

£495 pcm

Basset Street, Alumwell

- A 3 bed semi detached property
- 1 Good size reception room
- A good size fitted kitchen
- Shower room and bathroom
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- DSS accepted, rent in arrears for HB

£495 pcm

Abbey Square, Bloxwich

- A 3 bed mid terrace property
- 1 spacious reception room
- Fitted family kitchen/diner
- Upstairs bathroom with separate WC
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

£475 pcm

Scarborough Road, Pleck

- A traditional 3 bed mid terrace
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

£450 pcm

Lord Street, Palfrey

- A re-decorated 2 double bed end terrace
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- A modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Upstairs family bathroom with shower
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- DSS accepted, Rent in arrears for HB

£450 pcm

Darlaston Road

- A traditional 3 bed end terrace property
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted, rent in arrears for HB

£450 pcm

Lime Street, Chuckery

- Modern 2 bed mid terrace property
- Spacious reception room
- Fitted kitchen with cooker
- Upstairs family bathroom
- Fully enclosed rear garden and patio area
- Off road parking and DSS accepted

£450 pcm

St Georges Court, Walsall

- A Superb 1 bed 2nd floor apartment
- Open planned lounge/kitchen area
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Pleasant family bathroom
- Parking space and views of the town
- DSS accepted

£375 pcm

Bloxwich Road, Leamore

- Top floor studio apartment
- Modern fitted bathroom with shower
- Spacious living area
- Modern Fitted kitchen units
- DSS accepted with guarantor
- Rent accepted in arrears for HB

£350 pcm

Pleck Road, Pleck

- A 1 bed ground floor apartment
- 1 Double bed room
- A good size reception room
- A modern fitted kitchen/diner
- A spacious family bathroom
- Gas central heating and Double glazing

£225 pcm

Caldmore Road,

- A first floor studio apartment
- 1 Spacious lounge and bedroom area
- Fitted kitchen with cooker
- Pleasant bathroom with bath
- Double glazed and electric heating
- DSS Accepted, rent in arrears for HB

£525 pcm

LET
Similar properties required

Follyhouse Lane

- A 3 bed semi detached property
- 1 spacious through lounge
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Guest WC, Rear garden, DSS accepted

£450 pcm

LET IN 1 WEEK

Camberley Mews

- A modern 2 bed ground floor apartment
- Spacious living room
- Modern kitchen with integral appliances
- Pleasant family bathroom
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Parking space and fully alarmed



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Bloxwich
Revival Street
 ● Four Bedroom Detached
 ● Kitchen ● Through Lounge / Diner
 ● Bedroom En-Suite ● Family Bathroom
 ● Gas Central Heating ● Double Glazing
 ● Garage & Driveway ● Sorry no DHSS

£750 PCM



Walsall
Segundo Close
 ● Three Bedroom Detached
 ● Lounge ● Kitchen/Diner
 ● Double Glazing ● Rear Garden ● Garage
 ● Conservatory ● Sorry No DHSS

£575 PCM



Walsall
Flinkford Close
 ● Three Bedroom Terrace
 ● Two Reception rooms
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● Single Garage
 ● Sorry No DHSS

£575 PCM



Walsall
Smiths Flour Mill
 ● Two Bedroom Apartment
 ● Lounge ● Integrated Kitchen
 ● Electric Heating & Double Glazing
 ● Allocated Parking/Family Bathroom
 ● Sorry no DHSS

£550 PCM



Rushall
Springfields
 ● Three Bedroom Terrace
 ● Lounge with laminate flooring
 ● New Fitted Kitchen ● Family Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing/ G.C. Heating
 ● Rear Garden
 ● Sorry No DHSS or Pets or Smokers

£550 PCM



Walsall
Sneyd Lane
 ● Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
 ● Lounge ● Dining Room
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing ● Central Heating
 ● Sorry No DHSS

£525 PCM



Bloxwich
Wolverhampton Road
 ● Two Bedroom Terrace
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Fitted Kitchen/Diner ● Bathroom
 ● Central Heating ● Part Double Glazing
 ● Large Rear Garden ● Sorry No DHSS

£525 PCM



Walsall
Blackthorne Road
 ● Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
 ● Lounge ● Kitchen ● Family Bathroom
 ● Part Central Heated
 ● Double Glazing ● Off Road Parking
 ● Front & Rear Gardens ● Sorry No DHSS

£495 PCM



Walsall
Wellish Court
 ● Two Bedroom Top Floor Flat
 ● Lounge with Laminate Flooring
 ● Kitchen, Bathroom & Entrance Hallway
 ● Garage & Allocated Parking Space
 ● Sorry No DHSS

£475 PCM



Bloxwich
Evesham Crescent
 ● Three Bedroom Terrace
 ● Lounge Dining Room
 ● Fitted Kitchen ● Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing & Central Heating
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● DHSS Accepted

£475 PCM

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Bloxwich
Booth Street
 ● Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
 ● Lounge ● Kitchen ● Cloakroom W.C.
 ● Shower Room ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● Double Glazing
 ● DHSS Accepted

£495 PCM



Walsall
Roberts Road
 ● Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
 ● Lounge ● Fitted Kitchen ● Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing ● Gas Central Heating
 ● Front & Rear Gardens ● Garage
 ● Off Road Parking ● DHSS Accepted

£495 PCM



Bloxwich
Chepstow Way
 ● Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
 ● Bathroom ● Double Glazing
 ● Gas Central Heating
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● DHSS Accepted

£475 PCM



Bloxwich
Nursery Road
 ● Three Bedrooms Semi
 ● Lounge ● Kitchen ● Family Bathroom
 ● Downstairs W.C.
 ● Front and Rear Gardens
 ● Off Road Parking ● DHSS Accepted

£475 PCM



Bloxwich
Blakenall Lane
 ● Two Bedroom Mid-Terrace
 ● Kitchen ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Ground Floor Bathroom
 ● Further Room with W.C. & Wash Basin
 ● Gardens ● DHSS Considered

£475 PCM



Bloxwich
Shrewsbury Close
 ● Three Bedroom Terrace
 ● Lounge ● Dining Room
 ● Kitchen ● Bathroom
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● Sorry No DHSS

£475 PCM



Walker Road
Guild Court
 ● Two Bedroom Apartments
 ● Lounge/Kitchen ● Family Bathroom
 ● Gas Central Heating
 ● Double Glazing
 ● DHSS Accepted

£450 PCM



Walsall
Cairns Street
 ● Two Bed Refurbished Property
 ● Through Lounge
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Bathroom
 ● DHSS Accepted

£430 PCM



Bloxwich
Rockingham Close
 ● Two Bedroom Flat
 ● Part furnished ● Kitchen appliances
 ● Double glazing ● Electric heating
 ● Off-road parking
 ● DHSS Accepted

£425 PCM



Leamore
Leamore Lane
 ● Two Bedroom Terrace
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Kitchen ● Fitted Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing & Central Heating
 ● DHSS Accepted

£425 PCM



Walsall
Kent Street
 ● Three Bed Terrace
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Kitchen ● Bathroom
 ● Rear Garden ● DHSS Accepted
 ● Sorry no Pets or Smokers

£425 PCM



Bloxwich
Foster Street
 ● Two Bedroom Terrace
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Double Glazing ● Gas Central Heating
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● DHSS Accepted

£425 PCM



Walsall
Cairns Street
 ● Two Bedroom Terrace
 ● Being Refurbished throughout
 ● Kitchen ● Family Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing ● Gas Central Heating
 ● Rear Garden ● DHSS Accepted

£425 PCM



Bloxwich
High Street
 ● One Bedroom Flat
 ● Large Lounge ● Kitchen
 ● Large Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing ● Electric Heating
 ● Off Road Parking ● DHSS Accepted

£400 PCM



Bloxwich
High Street
 ● Two Bedroom Flat
 ● Bloxwich High St Location
 ● Lounge ● Kitchen ● Bathroom
 ● Stairs to Second Bedroom
 ● Off Road Parking ● DHSS Accepted

£400 PCM



Bloxwich
Field Road
 ● One Bedroom Flat
 ● Kitchen ● Bathroom
 ● Central Heating
 ● Double Glazing
 ● Sorry No DHSS

£375 PCM



Bloxwich
High Street
 ● One Bedroom Flat
 ● Lounge ● Shower Room
 ● Kitchen ● Electric Heating
 ● Double Glazing ● Parking Space To Rear
 ● DHSS Accepted

£375 PCM



Bloxwich
Parker Street
 ● One Bedroom Flats
 ● Lounge ● Kitchen
 ● Bathroom
 ● Central Heating
 ● DHSS Accepted

£370 PCM



Bloxwich
Harrison Street
 ● One Bedroom Flat
 ● Lounge ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Double Glazing
 ● Electric Heating
 ● DHSS Accepted

£350 PCM



Bloxwich
Elmore Green Road
 ● One Bedroom Flat
 ● Lounge ● Kitchen
 ● Bathroom
 ● Gas Central Heating
 ● DHSS Accepted

£325 PCM



Bloxwich
Barracks Lane
 ● One Bedroom Flat
 ● Lounge ● Kitchen
 ● Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing ● Electric Heating
 ● DHSS Accepted

£300 PCM



Rushall
Lichfield Road
 ● One Bedroom Flats
 ● Lounge ● Kitchen
 ● Bathroom ● Double Glazing
 ● Electric Heating
 ● DHSS Accepted

£300 PCM

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Local Vauxhall Dealer Celebrates Sales Success

Dudley Motor Company are celebrating their latest unprecedented sales success at their recent Vauxhall VIP BIG Event, when during the weekend of 16th to 19th November, the company sold 60 vehicles of which a staggering 48 were NEW CARS!

These figures ensured that Dudley Motor Company were one of THE Top Selling Vauxhall Dealerships in the country for this nationwide event. This is backed up by their consistent record of achievement, in 2011 this company were winners of the Vauxhall Chairman's Award for Excellence whilst they have a string of Regional Excellence awards lining their walls that stretches back every year to 2006.

General Manager Rob Gilbert commented that success is a testament to the high standards of customer care that are required by Vauxhall of their dealerships, which consistently result



in the company achieving high scores on customer surveys. This family run business of nearly 60 years is justifiably proud of these excellent standards in customer satisfaction, where personal service counts.

Rob Gilbert himself has worked for Vauxhall in Dudley for over 29 years whilst amongst this family run firms other loyal staff, Motability specialist, Tony Lister has over 50 years Vauxhall experience and Trevor Hollies in sales has over 34 years Vauxhall experience!

Dudley Motor Company now have over 50 part exchanges arriving within the next few weeks and we will be offering many of our cars at around cost price or below, so we can reduce our stocks down to a more manageable level.

During December and January, we will therefore be offering many one owner, low mileage part exchanges that will be priced TO GO! All cars will still benefit from the backing of this quality dealership for peace of mind. Supermarket Prices with Guaranteed Quality!! Rob Gilbert and his staff would like to wish all Dudley Motor Company friends and customers, a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.



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2010/60 Vauxhall Astra 1.4 5.5 Door Hatchback, Power red, 18000 miles.....	£9000
2009/59 Vauxhall Astra 1.6 SRi 5 Door Hatchback, power red, 22835 miles.....	£8999
2011/61 Vauxhall Astra 1.6 SRi Sat nav 5 Door Hatchback, silver lake, 13135 miles.....	£12000
2012/62 Vauxhall Astra 1.6 SRi VX-line 5 Door Hatchback, carbon flash, 20 miles.....	£14988
2009/09 Vauxhall Astra 1.6 SXi 3 Door Hatchback, Sapphire Black, 36000 miles.....	£7000
2009/59 Vauxhall Astra 1.6 Twin Top Sport 3 Door Convertible, sapphire black, 22000 miles.....	£7000
2012/12 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi Elite 5dr Hatchback automatic, sovereign silver, 8738 miles.....	£14000
2011/61 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi Elite Start/Stop 5dr Hatchback, sovereign silver, 2633 miles.....	£13499
2011/61 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi Elite Start/Stop 5dr Hatchback, technical grey, 6059 miles.....	£13000
2011/61 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi GTC SRi Start/Stop, Sat nav, silver lake, 2910 miles.....	£17000
2011/61 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi SE Sat Nav 5dr Estate automatic, sapphire black, 11421 miles.....	£14999
2011/61 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi SRi Start/Stop 5dr Hatchback, Sovereign silver, 12020 miles.....	£13699
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2011/61 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi SRi Start/Stop 5dr Hatchback, olympic white, 7974 miles.....	£13499
2011/61 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi SRi Start/Stop 5dr Hatchback, Sovereign silver, 9400 miles.....	£13000

CORSA

2004/54 Vauxhall Corsa 1.0 Life 3 Door Hatchback, wine red, 27790 miles.....	£3499
2008/58 Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 Active 3 Door Hatchback, Black, 39090 miles.....	£5999
2009/59 Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 Active 5 Door Hatchback, star silver, 30000 miles.....	£7000
2009/59 Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 CDTi Active ecoFLEX 3dr Hatchback, Sapphire Black, 27000 miles.....	£7000
2008/08 Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 Club 5 Door Hatchback, Blue, 23733 miles.....	£5999
2010/10 Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 Energy 5 Door Hatchback, star silver, 17723 miles.....	£7499
2009/58 Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 SXi 5 Door Hatchback, sapphire black, 41000 miles.....	£6499
2012/12 Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 SXi AC 5 Door Hatchback, carbon flash, 12337 miles.....	£9000
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2011/11 Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 SXi 3 Door Hatchback, Black sapphire, 15196 miles.....	£8000
2008/57 Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 SXi 3 Door Hatchback, sapphire black, 29865 miles.....	£6000
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2011/61 Vauxhall Corsa 1.6 VXR 3 Door Hatchback, Arden blue, 2494 miles.....	£12000
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INSIGNIA

2009/59 Vauxhall Insignia 1.8 SRi 5 Door Estate, carbon flash, 23000 miles.....	£9499
2011/61 Vauxhall Insignia 1.8 SRi 5 Door Hatchback, Carbon Flash, 12205 miles.....	£12000
2010/60 Vauxhall Insignia 1.8 SRi Hatchback, technical grey, 21072 miles.....	£10000
2009/09 Vauxhall Insignia 1.8 SRi Nav 5 Door Hatchback, panacota, 35233 miles.....	£8000
2012/61 Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi Elite Nav 5dr Hatch auto, Technical grey, 14736 miles.....	£16000
2011/11 Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi SE Nav 5 Door Estate auto, sovereign silver, 21000 miles.....	£13499
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2011/61 Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi SRi Start/Stop 5dr Hatch 4x4, olympic white, 5182 miles.....	£16000

MERIVA

2011/11 Vauxhall Meriva 1.4 SE 5 Door MPV, Star silver, 15500 miles.....	£9499
2006/06 Vauxhall Meriva 1.6 Breeze 5 Door MPV automatic, Star Silver, 41173 miles.....	£3999

ZAFIRA

2009/59 Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 Design 5 Door MPV, Sapphire black, 31000 miles.....	£8499
2012/12 Vauxhall Zafira 2.0 CDTi SRi Tourer Start/Stop 5dr MPV, Olympic white, 5947 miles.....	£17999

CHEVROLET

2011/11 Chevrolet Cruze 1.6 LT Hatchback Automatic, Moroccan Blue, 4634 miles.....	£8499
2009/09 Chevrolet Lacetti 1.8 SX 5 Door Estate Automatic, Misty Lake, 13700 miles.....	£4499
2005/05 Chevrolet Matiz 1.0 SE+ 5 Door Hatchback, poly Silver, 37849 miles.....	£2499
2009/58 Chevrolet Matiz 1.0 SE 5 Door Hatchback, sky blue, 19981 miles.....	£4000
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2012/12 Chevrolet Orlando 2.0 VCDi LT 5 Door Hatchback, Carbon Flash, 7077 miles.....	£13499
2011/60 Chevrolet Orlando 2.0 VCDi LTZ Sat nav MPV, Velvet red, 13508 miles.....	£13000
2011/61 Chevrolet Spark 1.2 LS 5 Door Hatchback, Ice Teal, 7147 miles.....	£6499

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Applications can be viewed at First Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Walsall or online www.walsall.gov.uk/planning
Representations can be made online, email: planning.services@walsall.gov.uk or in writing to Head of Planning and Building Control, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG. Representations should be made within 21 days of the date of this notice.
Please note: Your letter and personal details will form part of the planning file which is a public document and will be available for inspection at the Council Offices. The information may be released as part of a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

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Mark sets his sights on potting top places

MARK JOYCE was unable to repeat his giant-killing heroics in the second round of the UK Championships – but the Walsall potter insists he will return stronger.

The 29-year-old shocked defending champion and newly-crowned world No.1 Judd Trump in the first round, but saw Ali Carter, world No.14 and runner-up at this year's championships, go into a 4-0 lead.

Despite a revival after the mid-session interval Joyce left himself too much to do and eventually perished 6-2.

Joyce, who had a fractured elbow and eye socket in a 2011 attack, said: "It's difficult when you don't play all that much in front of the TV cameras so it's up to me to keep working hard so I get to play these tournaments more and can get used to it."

"Cueing off the rail is one of the things I have struggled with since the injury because I have got a slight tremor. I have to take some confidence because the last 16 of a ranking event is a big result for me, but I have to try and put myself in these positions as much as I can."

Most-wins Ryan stays in top form

WOOD GREEN A are setting the pace at the halfway mark in Division One of the Walsall and District Table-Tennis League.

Ryan Fellows has been in scintillating form and heads the "most wins" table with just one defeat in 27 games.

Liam Farmer, of Vic Park B, is just one victory behind. Three wins for Paul Worrallo and two for George Falcus enabled Wood Green B to draw 5-5 with Wyrley C. Back-to-form Graham Foxall was unbeaten in a 6-4 victory for champions Vic Park A over Wood Green C, for whom Parminder Singh won twice.

At the bottom, Wyrley A continue to struggle with recent 6-4 defeats to Wyrley B and Wood Green D, keeping them behind the D.

Division One		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Wood Green A	9	8	0	1	76	14	76	
Vic Park B	9	8	1	0	67	23	67	
Vic Park A	9	6	1	2	62	28	62	
Wood Green C	9	3	1	5	46	44	46	
Albington	9	5	1	3	44	46	44	
Great Wyrley C	9	3	3	4	44	46	44	
Wood Green B	9	2	3	4	40	50	40	
Great Wyrley B	9	2	1	6	33	57	33	
Wood Green D	9	2	0	7	21	69	21	
Great Wyrley A	9	0	0	9	17	73	17	



Taz Daliwall scores for Walsall Colts

Matt's boot makes big impact

Barkers Butts 25 Walsall 36

THE boot of Matt Wood helped Walsall to victory as both sides scored five tries.

Wood's four conversions and a penalty made the difference in the Midlands One West match.

Walsall were 12-0 up after 15 minutes as captain Steve Halbert supported Daniel Simpson for the first try and winger Paul Naylor ran in a good try from 20 metres with Wood adding the conversion.

Despite four first-half tries for the home side, as the interval approached, Walsall led.

Wood put over a penalty and converted a Mark Reeves try,

after a period of pressure, for a 22-20 lead at half-time.

This pattern repeated throughout most of the second half, but on several occasions Walsall failed to keep control or were guilty of indiscipline at crucial moments.

A Stephen Halbert run and pass saw Harvey Wootton make a powerful burst to break through from 20 metres for the next try.

Their final score was 10 minutes later as Halbert and scrum-half Liam Lloyd linked up

before releasing to Jeffrey Williamson, who showed good speed and awareness to cross.

Wood landed another conversion. The hosts got a late score, but Walsall had done enough.

On Saturday Camp Hill are the visitors to Delves Road (2.15pm).

The United had an incredible 33-22 win at Wolverhampton, despite arriving with only 13 players. Jack Crowhurst scored two tries; there were one apiece for Jamie and Josh Hickman and

Andy Field, with Andy Hawkins kicking four conversions.

The thirds lost their Merit Table game against a strong Tamworth team, going down 26-17 despite two tries for Phil Stanley and one for David Wild, James Quigley landing a conversion.

The Colts won 38-10 at Stafford in the third round of the National Plate. They ran in six tries through Richard Baker (2), Aaron Chew, Taz Daliwall, Connor McGuirk and Rob Angell who also kicked four conversions. Walsall face Melbourne of Derbyshire in the fourth round early next year.

Aldridge fail to fire and fall to Rugeley

Aldridge 18 Rugeley 25

ALDRIDGE stumbled to Midlands Five West (North) defeat in a vital game against league leaders Rugeley they were expecting to win.

But their overall performance fell way short. Rugeley had much the better of the first half and Aldridge only spasmodically gained parity.

This gave the visitors space and time to exploit.

Full-back Mat Woollerscroft and centre Jordan Wood crossed with plenty of room to spare. A conversion and a penalty from Wood gave them a 15-3 lead at the interval – a penalty from scrum-half Chris Jones the Aldridge contribution.

Aldridge had more of the game in the second half as their forwards at last began to gain some momentum.

A typical driving effort from Jones got him over between the posts and the conversion was made. But Rugeley responded with a pushover try by No. 8 Mitchell Everall.

Aldridge flanker Richard Tipton's determined run took him over near the posts and a Jones penalty got the home side within two points. But Rugeley counter attacked and prop Martin Bentley scored.

Football results

Lichfield & Walsall District

Ask Motors Premier: Farmer Johns

7. Burntwood Dragons A 4; Pelsall Villa

Colts 9. ASP Victoria 3.

Rio Driving Tuition League 1:

Burntwood 10. Stomall 1; Prince of

Wales 5. Lions 0.

Stretton Paving League 2: Free-

mans B 1; Green Rock Tavern 2;

Longdon Chet 1. Cannock Wood 3;

Shire Oak 7; Paradise Lounge 2; Shire Oak

Saints Warriors 0. Chase Terrace Vic 3.

Computa-Tec League 3: Burntwood

Dragons B 0. Bowman 1; Cellar Door 1

Trent Valley Flowers 3; Lichfield Social B

2. Kross 5; Pheassey Ath 1. Sheffield 4.

Jack Donnelly Cup Round 2: Lich-

field Soc A 8. Dosthill Rgrs 2; Park Tav 1

Burntwood St Matthews 3. Round 3:

Burntwood Star 7. Railway Tav 2.

Lichfield Challenge Cup Round 2:

B'rhills Comm Colts 1. Rushall 0; Ros

Park 1. Erdington Star 2.

Lucas strike

shines for Pics

Rushall Olympic U11 1

Hawkins Sports U11 1

RUSHALL opened well and

Jack Hunt found the net

only for offside to be ruled.

The Pics were on the front

foot in the second period and

Lucas Fallon's fine strike

put them ahead. Rushall

continued to press but

Hawkins levelled with an

excellent strike.



Walsall striker Will Grigg tries to escape the attentions of James Bailey



Andy Butler and Dean Smith after the sending-off

October. They feel it is statement enough that they are backing the boss who no-one doubted in September.

The Saddlers embarked on a project over the summer and they are not about to bin it because of two rocky months.

It is harsh to question a manager while the ink is barely dry on a new deal, but Walsall haven't got the results – the only important commodity right now.

Promise and potential is all well and good, but it must be backed up by three points otherwise those rumblings of discontent from the terraces will get louder.

One hopes the supporters can understand Smith's problems. There is no money; the cupboard is bare and, while they want to see a winning team, 19th in League One is about the norm for Walsall. They are where they

are. Even so, pre-Christmas home games with Yeovil and Colchester have turned into 'must wins'.

Saturday's defeat moved them closer to the relegation zone and Walsall won't want to be reminded of their first ever visit to the Ricoh Arena. The last time the teams met, in 2004, Coventry won 6-1 and they went close to repeating the result.

Blair Adams' swipe into his own net gave the Saddlers a deserved lead on 16 minutes but it served only to rile the Sky Blues.

After several near-misses, Carl Baker glided into the area to beat Aaron McCarey at his near post on 29 minutes and Walsall disintegrated.

Two strikes in two minutes from McGoldrick – although his second should be credited as a Holden own goal – sunk the

Saddlers. First he chipped over McCarey after Jamie Paterson lost possession and then his shot ricocheted in off Holden after Butler's goaline clearance.

That was on 41 minutes and the Saddlers had no answer to the rampant Sky Blues. Will Grigg lobbed over after the break, but there was no great recovery.

McGoldrick hit a post before Cyrus Christie's 61st-minute effort ended the game as a contest.

Holden had a goal questionably disallowed for offside and worse was to follow when Butler walked for his second yellow card.

Baker then curled a shot into the corner from 20 yards with six minutes left before Walsall's misery was ended. Time to call in the mountain rescue.

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SPORT

Ricoh rout
Saddlers thrashed
by Sky Blues
Page 39



Terrific Taz
Daliwall scores in
Colts' victory
Page 39



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e-mail: chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Holgate's hit fails to inspire an equaliser

Dunkirk 2 Continental Star 1
A SECOND-HALF Daniel Holgate goal gave Star hope in this Midlands Alliance match after they trailed 2-0.

Despite pressing throughout the final 20 minutes, they could not net again.

Star paid for defensive errors and failed to get to grips with set-piece play. They had a let-off after seven minutes as a Tom Maddison corner was half-cleared and Kevin Springs' fierce shot was cleared off the line by Allando Davis.

Three minutes later, Maddison played a free-kick into the Star box which Stuart Robinson flicked on. Kieran Wells slid in at the far post but just failed to connect.

Star struggled to get moving and fell behind on 21 minutes as a Maddison delivery, this time a corner, saw Wells bury a powerful header.

Star were better in the second half and Tony Green sent a vicious 20-yard shot which dipped just over the home bar.

But Dunkirk scored a second after Star keeper Karl Hunter palmed away a Springs piledriver for a corner. Maddison, perhaps inevitably, floated in the flag-kick and Wells rose to head the ball into the bottom right-hand corner for his second goal of the game.

Holgate's low volley from a corner gave Star hope, but Dunkirk held firm.

Loss despite hard battle

Bloxwich 1 Market Drayton 2
BLOXWICH men's hockey team finally battled hard against unbeaten Market Drayton but lost.

An end-to-end first half was scoreless, but Bloxwich pressed early in the second.

Market Drayton scored first despite home claims that the ball was kicked.

Bloxwich levelled with a Ste Mazurek penalty flick which sent the keeper the wrong way but a defensive error at a short corner was costly as Market Drayton bagged the winner.

Bromsgrove 0 Bloxwich 2

The seconds rounded off a superb first half of the season with a win at Bromsgrove with goals from Adam McCord and Nathan Booker.

The win leaves Bloxwich only three points behind leaders Old Sils. Phil Foster had a fine game in midfield and Simon Lunn marshalled the defence superbly.

Pics' point puts power into Pitmen's push

JOSH CRADDOCK'S late goal saw Rushall come back from a 2-0 half-time deficit to earn a point at table-topping North Ferriby United—and help title hopefuls Hednesford.

The Pitmen beat FC United of Manchester 1-0 to go within a point of North Ferriby at the top of the Evo-Stik Northern Premier.

Dean Liles met a corner with a header to give North Ferriby the lead and they kept causing Pics trouble with their pace.

Rushall, with no game for a fortnight and missing injured and suspended players, struggled. However, as the game settled, they started to come more into it but found clear-cut chances hard to come by.

North Ferriby Utd 2 Rushall Olympic 2

Craddock, constantly pushing on from midfield to add an aerial presence to the front line, deftly flicked one shot towards goal but it had insufficient power.

The Pics had a penalty shout rejected as Ramone Stephens appeared to be bundled over but North Ferriby scored with five minutes of the half left as Gregg Anderson hit a swerving effort from 30 yards.

Pics, after a lively half-time pep talk, were sent out early for the second period.

A corner hit the bar and they had a couple of efforts on goal, but were still indebted to

Chris Gemmell for keeping them in it. North Ferriby seemed certain to score as a full-length Gemmell parry came back with the stopper still grounded. As the rebound was hit towards the net, Mitchell Tolley cleared.

After 79 minutes Pics' Stephens twisted and turned and, just as it appeared he was dispossessed, fought his way past two defenders and fired hard and low across the six-yard box for it to deflect in off Anderson.

Two minutes later Pics were level. Johnny Haynes' long throw wasn't cleared effectively and Michael Clarke's

flick-on was shielded by Stephens with his back to goal. The wide man was able to lay the ball off to the on-rushing Craddock who rifled the ball home from 14 yards to send all associated with Rushall into raptures.

The closing minutes saw the home side looking to once more re-establish their lead and they thought they had when the ball was fired home after Gemmell's initial fine block but the assistant referee raised his flag for an infringement.

The Pics were not to be denied and came away with a point that leaves them in 12th place with games in hand that could yet see them into the play-offs.

Hat-trick humbles Lockmen

Black Country Rangers 4 Willenhall Town 1

WILLENHALL'S winning run of five games came to a crashing halt when they were beaten by West Midlands Premier high-fliers Black Country Rangers.

The dangerous James McKenzie caused problems for the Rangers back four early on and was brought down in the box by keeper Luke Tilt. He was sent off and Craig Oldfield fired in from the spot.

The Lockmen were on top at this stage and could have increased their lead.

McKenzie was denied a second penalty when he appeared to be fouled in the box.

But the first half ended with the home side's Liam Hughes skipping past the defence before firing wide.

Willenhall failed to cash in on their extra man advantage in the second half as they regularly gave the ball away.

Rangers regrouped and the game turned when Callum Haynes, who had handled Hughes well, limped off.

Hughes smashed in a hat-trick in 10 minutes. Rangers added a fourth from David Meese.

Wood facing the big one in Vase

WALSALL WOOD face what the club say is the biggest game in their history.

On Saturday they host Wigan Robin Park at Oak Park in the third round of the FA Vase (3pm).

And Wood have the incentive of another home tie in the fourth round, should they progress, when they would take on Hanworth Villa.

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PRESSURE NOW ON AFTER CITY DEFEAT

WALSALL boss Dean Smith has admitted "the pressure is always there" after a 5-1 thrashing at Coventry marked the club's 15th successive game without a win.

The boss came under fire from fans following Saturday's Ricoh Arena defeat, which left the Saddlers just three points above the drop zone. They are 19th in League One ahead of key pre-Christmas home clashes with Yeovil and Colchester.

But Smith, who guided the Saddlers to safety in the last two seasons, insists he can handle the heat.

"There's pressure on every game you play. You want to go out and get a win for your supporters, players and families," he said.

"The pressure is always there, whether you're on a good run, bad run or an indifferent one.

"The fans were fantastic on Saturday, they came in their droves, supported us, were singing and were taunting the Coventry fans.

Frustrations
"I can understand their frustrations because they can see the goals we conceded as well.

"We've got two home games to come now and we have got make sure we get a win quickly in one of those."

Winless since September, the Saddlers were put out of the FA Cup by Lincoln and the Johnstone's Paint Trophy by Port Vale, but this rout was a first time to ship five goals under Smith.

Defender Dean Holden said: "The gaffer was playing himself, as was Rich (O'Kelly), and no-one wants to be associated with a team at the bottom getting hammered. He's first-class with the lads, he treats you like adults and a professional.

"He deserves success for

by Nick Mashiter

the amount of effort everyone puts in that people don't see. But they are not interested in that, they are just interested in the results and probably rightly so.

"From what we put aside from matchday we are underachieving in terms of results."

Smith risked an FA rap by blasting referee Nigel Miller.

He was furious as Miller sent Andy Butler off late on and felt the third and fourth goals were invalid.

"There was no consistency and (referee boss) David Allison will be getting a phone call from me," he said. "I'm really disappointed with our display after the goals went in, certainly defensively, but I end up talking about a referee's performance as well.

"I haven't had him for five years, since I was at Leyton Orient and we played Leeds away.

"Martin Ling was the manager at the time and gave him 0/100. I won't be giving him too many more."

"I thought the fourth goal was offside and we were down to 10 men for the fifth."

"I've got to come out and explain why we lost 5-1, but the officials don't have to do that."

Keeper makes his mark to deny Khalsa victory



Pegasus keeper Mikel Corbisier gets down to deny Khalsa's Aaron Wills (blue and yellow). Picture: Dave Hawley

SPORTING KHALSA were denied a West Midlands Premier win by Pegasus keeper Mikel Corbisier.

The visitors started brightly at the Aspray Arena with a large percentage of the possession, but without creating any scoring opportunities.

Khalsa, on the other hand, looked livelier in the final third.

Sporting Khalsa 1 Pegasus Juniors 1

The home side went ahead after 25 minutes against the run of play when Aaron Wills volleyed the ball from just outside the box into the corner of the net.

Khalsa started to create more chances in the second half but wasted

two great opportunities. The chances fell to Scott Sandland and Reece Cotterill, but the misses proved costly as Pegasus levelled in the 75th minute.

Khalsa started to increase the tempo of their game, but Corbisier pulled off three excellent saves from Danny Carter, Sam Pearson and Mark Habbershaw to give his side a point.

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